THE WORKS OF J. J. ROUSSEAU.

Tranſlated from the FRENCH.

IN TEN VOLUMES.

VOLUME the EIGHTH.

EDINBURGH
Printed for ALEX. DONALDSON.
Sold at his ſhop, N° 48. St Paul's church-yard,
London; and at *Edinburgh*.

M.DCC.LXXIV.

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31 OCT 1958
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This VOLUME contains,

A letter on French muſic.

Narciſſus; or, The ſelf-admirer. A comedy.

The Village Conjuror. An interlude.

On theatrical imitation. An eſſay compoſed from the dialogues of Plato.

Sylvia's walk.

Advertiſement to an anonymous writer.

Extract of a letter to a friend, on the works of Rameau.

Extract of a letter to a friend. Written from Montmorency, April 5th 1749, in regard to Mr Rouſſeau's freedom of entry at the opera; which was given him for his Village Conjuror, was taken from him on account of his letter on the French muſic, and was offered to be returned to him again after he had quitted Paris.

An epiſtle to Mr D'Alembert, member of the French academy, &c. concerning the article GENEVA, in the ſeventh volume of the Encyclopedie; and particularly on the project of eſtabliſhing a play-houſe in that city.

Letters on different occaſions.

A LETTER ON FRENCH MUSIC.

Sunt verba et voces, prætereaque nihil.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE quarel, which aroſe laſt year at the Opera, being kept up only by abuſe, thrown out with a good deal of wit by one party, and retorted with as much animoſity by the other, I declined taking any part in the affair: for this kind of conteſt does not, in any ſhape, agree with me, and I ſaw it was not then a proper time to gain attention to reaſon. At preſent, the buffoons being diſmiſſed, or on the point of being ſo, and caballing at an end, I ſhall hazard my opinion; which I ſhall give with my uſual ſincerity, without fearing my frankneſs ſhould offend. It even appears to me, that upon ſuch a ſubject reſerve would be injurious to my readers: for I confeſs I ſhould have but a very indifferent opinion of a people who ſhould give a ridiculous importance to mere ſing-ſong; who ſhould ſet greater ſtore by their fiddlers than their philoſophers; and a-

mong whom it would be neceſſary to talk of muſic with as much circumſpection as of the graveſt ſubjects of morality. It is for the reaſon I have juſt hinted at, that although ſome, it is ſaid, accuſe me of having ſhewn a want of reſpect to the French muſic in my firſt edition, the much greater reſpect and eſteem which I owe to the nation prevent my making any alteration in the preſent.

It would be almoſt incredible alſo, if it related to any other perſon but myſelf, that I ſhould be charged with ſpeaking contemptuouſly of the French language in a work where it is only mentioned as relating to muſic. I have not altered a ſingle word, touching this point, in the preſent edition; ſo that the reader may judge for himſelf, after a cool and attentive peruſal, whether or not ſuch accuſation be juſt.

It is true, that, although we have had ſome excellent poets, and even ſome muſicians not deſtitute of genius, yet I think our language but little adapted to poetry; and not at all to muſic! On this head I may venture to appeal even to the poets themſelves; for as to the muſicians, every body knows it is quite needleſs to conſult them on any ſubject of reaſoning. In return, however, the French language appears to me that of ſages and philoſophers *: it ſeems formed to be the organ of truth and reaſon; wo be to him who offends either the one or the other by diſhonouring it! As to my own part, the moſt worthy homage I think myſelf capable of paying

* This is the opinion of the Author of the letter on the deaf and dumb; an opinion which he well maintains in his appendix to that work, and ſtill better proves by all his writings.

paying to that beautiful and correct tongue which I have the happineſs to make uſe of, is to endeavour not to debaſe it.

But, though I will not, and think I ought not to change my manner of writing with regard to the republic; although I expect nothing of it, and give myſelf as little trouble about its ſatires as its encomiums; I think I ought to reſpect it more than that herd of mercenary and dangerous writers who flatter it out of ſelf-intereſt. This reſpect, it is true, does not conſiſt in thoſe artful pretences which betray the writer's opinion of the weakneſs of his readers; but in paying due deference to their judgment, by ſupporting the propoſitions advanced with ſolid reaſoning; which is what I have always endeavoured to do. Thus, in whatever light we regard things, in equitably diſcuſſing all the clamours which this letter hath excited, I am apprehenſive, in the end, that my greateſt fault will be found to be that of having the truth on my ſide; for which I am ſenſible that in this caſe I ſhall never be forgiven.

ON FRENCH MUSIC.

YOU muſt remember, Sir, the ſtory of the Sileſian infant, ſpoken of by Mr de Fontenelle, who was born, it was ſaid, with a golden tooth in its head. The literati of Germany were all immediately employed in learned diſſertations, to explain how a child might be born with a golden tooth. The laſt thing they thought of was to inquire into the truth of the fact; which having done, it appeared that the

tooth was not gold. To prevent our falling into the ſame error, it may not be amiſs, before we ſpeak of the excellence of the French muſic, to be aſſured of the reality of its exiſtence; and to examine firſt, not whether it be of gold or not, but whether there be really any at all.

The Germans, the Spaniards, and the Engliſh, have long pretended to poſſeſs a muſic peculiar to their own language. In fact, they have their own country-operas which they really admire; and yet they were formerly perſuaded it would do honour to their taſte, to aboliſh thoſe maſter-pieces, becauſe they were inſupportable to the ears of all other nations. At length, however, pleaſure got the better of vanity, and they ſacrificed to taſte and reaſon thoſe prejudices which render a people often ridiculous merely from the notions of honour they annex to them.

We are now in France in the ſame ſituation which the Engliſh were in formerly; but who can aſſure us, that becauſe we are more opinionative and poſitive, we are therefore more in the right? Would it not be proper, in order to form a right judgment of this matter, to bring the French muſic to the ſtandard of reaſon, and ſee if it will bear the teſt?

It is not my deſign to enter here into a profound examination of this point; it is not the buſineſs of a letter, nor perhaps is it mine. I would only endeavour, therefore, to eſtabliſh a few principles, on which, till better are diſcovered, the maſters of this art, or rather philoſophers, may direct their reſearches: for it was formerly ſaid by a ſage, that it belongs to a poet

to

to write verſes, to a muſician to compoſe muſic; but that it belongs only to a philoſopher to treat properly either of the one or the other.

All muſic is compoſed only of three things; melody or ſong, harmony or the accompaniment, and movement or meaſure.

Although ſong takes its principal character from meaſure; as it ariſes immediately from harmony, and always ſubjects the accompaniment to it, I ſhall here join theſe two parts in the ſame article, and afterwards ſpeak of the meaſure ſeparately.

Harmony, having its principle in nature, is the ſame for all nations; or, if there be any minute differences, they are introduced by that of melody: thus the particular character of a national muſic is deduced from melody alone, ſong properly ſo called exerting its influence in proportion as its character is principally given by the language.

It is eaſy to conceive, that ſome languages are more proper for muſic than others, and that there may be ſome languages totally improper for any. Of the latter kind would be a language compoſed of mixt ſounds, of mute, ſurd, and naſal ſyllables, of few ſonorous vowels, and a great many conſonants and articulations; and which might want ſome of thoſe eſſential conditions which I ſhall ſpeak of under the article of meaſure. For the ſake of curioſity, let us inquire what would be the conſequence of applying muſic to ſuch a language.

In the firſt place, the want of force in the ſound of the vowels would oblige the compoſer to give a good deal to the notes; and becauſe the language would be ſurd, the muſic would be

noiſy. In the ſecond place, the hardneſs and frequency of the conſonants would oblige him to exclude a great number of words, to proceed on others only by elementary tones, ſo that the muſic would be inſipid and monotonous. For the ſame reaſon, it would be ſlow and tireſome; and when the movement ſhould be ever ſo little accelerated, its haſte would reſemble that of an hard and angular body rolling along on the pavement.

As ſuch a muſic would be deſtitute of all agreeable melody, the compoſer would endeavour to ſupply its place by factitious and unnatural beauties; it would be charged with frequent and regular modulations; but cold, graceleſs, and inexpreſſive. Recourſe would be had to trills, ſtops, ſhakes, and other falſe graces; which would ſerve only to render the ſong more ridiculous, without rendering it leſs inſipid.

A muſic attended with ſuch ſuperfluous ornaments will be always faint and inexpreſſive; while its images, deſtitute of all force and energy, deſcribe but a few objects in a great number of notes; exactly like Gothic writing, the lines of which are full of ſtrokes and characters, yet contain only two or three words, and but a very ſmall quantity of meaning in a great ſpace of paper.

The impoſſibility of inventing agreeable ſongs, would oblige the compoſers to turn all their thoughts to the ſide of harmony; and, for want of natural beauties, to introduce thoſe of arbitrary faſhion, which have no other merit than lies in the delicacy of the execution. Thus, inſtead of compoſing good muſic, they would compoſe difficult muſic; and, to ſupply the want of ſimple melody

melody would multiply their accompaniments. It would coſt them much leſs trouble to lay a great many bad things one upon another, than to invent one good one.

In order to remove the inſipidity, they would increaſe the confuſion; and imagine they were making muſic when they were only making a noiſe.

Another effect which would reſult from this defect of melody, is, that the muſicians, having only a falſe idea of it, would invent a melody of their own. Having nothing of true muſic, they would find no difficulty in multiplying its parts; becauſe they would give that name to what was not ſo; even to the thorough baſs; to the uniſon of which they would make no ſcruple to recite the counter-tenor, under cover of a ſort of accompaniment, whoſe pretended melody would have no manner of relation to the vocal part of the ſong. Wherever they ſaw notes they would find a tune, although in effect their tune would be nothing but a ſucceſſion of notes; *voces, pretereaque nihil.* Let us proceed now to the meaſure, in the diſpoſition of which conſiſts the greater part of the beauty and expreſſion of the ſong.

Meaſure is to melody nearly what ſyntaxis is to diſcourſe: it is that which connects the words, diſtinguiſhes the phraſes, and gives ſenſe and conſiſtency to the whole. All muſic whoſe meaſure is not perceived, if the fault lie in the perſon who executes it, reſembles writing in cypher, which requires one to have a key to explain it: but if the muſic have no ſenſible meaſure in itſelf, it is only a confuſed collection of words taken at hazard, and writ-

ten without connection, in which the reader finds no ſenſe becauſe the author gave them none.

I have ſaid, that every national muſic takes its principal character from the language which is peculiar to it: and I ſhould have added, that it is the proſody of that language which principally conſtitutes its character. As vocal muſic long preceded the inſtrumental, the latter hath always received from the former both its tune and time: now the different meaſures of vocal muſic could ariſe only from the different methods of ſcanning a diſcourſe, and placing the long and ſhort ſyllables with regard to each other. This is very evident in the Greek muſic, whoſe meaſures were only ſo many formula of the rythmi furniſhed by the arrangements of long or ſhort ſyllables, and of thoſe feet of which the language and its poetry were ſuſceptible. So that, although one may very well diſtinguiſh in the muſical rythmus the meaſure of the proſody, the meaſure of the verſe, and the meaſure of the tune, it cannot be doubted that the moſt ageeable muſic, or at leaſt that of the moſt complete cadence, would be that in which the three meaſures ſhould concur as perfectly as poſſible.

After theſe ecclaireiſſements, I return to my hypotheſis, and ſuppoſe that the language I have been ſpeaking of ſhould have a defective proſody, indiſtinct, inexact, and without preciſion; that its long and ſhort ſyllables ſhould have no ſimple relations with regard to time or number, ſo as to render its rythmus agreeable, exact, and regular; that is long ſyllables ſhould be ſome ſhorter, and others longer, than others; that

that its ſhort ones ſhould in like manner be more or leſs ſhort; that it ſhould have many neither ſhort nor long; and that the differences between the one and the other ſhould be indeterminate and almoſt incommenſurable. It is clear, that the national muſic, being obliged to receive into its meaſure the irregularities of the proſody, would have ſuch meaſure of courſe vague, unequal, and hardly perceptible; that its recitative would in particular partake of this irregularity; that it would be very difficult to make the force of the notes and ſyllables agree; that the meaſure would be obliged to be perpetually changed, and that the verſes never could be ſet to an exact and flowing meaſure: that, even in the meaſured airs, the movements would be all unnatural and void of preciſion; that if to this defect be added ever ſo little delay in time, the very idea of its inequality would be entirely loſt both in the finger and the auditor; and that, in fine, the meaſure not being perceived, nor its returns equal, it could be ſubject only to the caprice of the muſician, who might hurry or retard it as he pleaſed: ſo that it would be impoſſible to keep up a concert without ſomebody to mark the time to all, according to the fancy or convenience of ſome leader.

Hence it is that ſingers contract ſuch an habit of altering the time, that they frequently do it deſignedly even in thoſe pieces where the compoſer has happily rendered it perceptible. To mark the time would be thought a fault in compoſition, and to follow it would be another in the taſte of ſinging: thus defects would paſs for beauties, and beauties for defects; errors would

would be eſtabliſhed as rules; and to compoſe muſic to the taſte of the nation, it would be neceſſary to apply carefully to thoſe things which would diſpleaſe every other people in the world.

Thus, whatever art might be uſed to hide the defects of ſuch muſic, it would be impoſſible it ſhould be pleaſing to any other ears than thoſe of the natives of the country where it ſhould be in vogue. By dint of ſuffering conſtant reproaches againſt their bad taſte, and by hearing real muſic in a language more favourable to it, they would at length endeavour to make their own reſemble it: in doing which, however, they would only deprive it of its real character, and the little accordance it might have with the language for which it was conſtructed. If they ſhould thus endeavour to unnaturalize their ſinging, they would render it harſh, rough, and almoſt unutterable: if they contented themſelves with ornamenting it with any other than ſuch accompaniments as were peculiarly adapted to it, they would only betray its inſipidity by an inevitable contraſt: they would deprive their muſic of the only beauty it was ſuſceptible of, in taking from all its parts that uniformity of character by which it was conſtituted; and, by accuſtoming their ears to diſdain the ſinging only to liſten to the ſymphony, they would in time reduce the voices only to a mere accompaniment of the accompaniments.

Thus we ſee by what means the muſic of ſuch a nation would be divided into vocal and inſtrumental; and thus we ſee how, by giving ſuch different characters to the two ſpecies of it, they make a monſtrous compound of them when united.

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The ſymphony would keep time; and the ſinging would ſuffer no reſtraint; ſo that the ſingers and the ſymphoniſts in the orcheſtra would be perpetually at variance, and putting one another out. This uncertainty, and the mixture of the two characters, would introduce in the manner of accompaniment ſuch a tameneſs and inſipidity, that the ſymphoniſts would get ſuch a habit, that they would not be able even to execute the beſt muſic with ſpirit and energy. In playing that like their own, they would totally enervate it; they would play the *ſoft* ſtrong and the *ſtrong* ſoft, nor would they know one of the varieties of theſe two terms. As to the others, *rinforzando*, *dolce* *, *riſoluto*, *con guſto*, *ſpiritoſo*, *ſoſtenuto*, *con brio*, they would have no words for them in their language, and that of *expreſſion* would be totally void of meaning. They would ſubſtitute a number of trifling, cold, and ſlovenly ornaments, in the place of the maſterly ſtroke of the bow: and however numerous their orcheſtra, it would have no effect, or none but what was very diſagreeable. As the execution would be always ſluggiſh, and the ſymphoniſts are ever more ſolicitous to play finely than to play in time, they would be hardly ever together; they would never be able to give an exact and juſt note, nor to execute any thing in that character. Foreigners would be almoſt all of them aſtoniſhed to find an orcheſtra, boaſted of as the firſt in Europe, hardly

* There are not perhaps four French ſymphoniſts in Paris, who know the difference between *piano* and *dolce*; and indeed it would be unneceſſary for them ſo to do, for which of them would be capable of executing it?

hardly worthy to play at a booth in a fair †. It would be naturally expected that such musicians should get an aversion to that music which thus disgraced their own; and that, adding ill-will to bad taste, they would put in execution the design of decrying it, with as ill success as it was absurdly premeditated.

On a contrary supposition to the foregoing, I might easily deduce all the qualities of a real music, formed to move, to imitate, to please, and to convey to the heart the most delicate impressions of harmony: but as this would lead me too far from my present subject, and particularly from our generally-received notions of things, I shall confine myself to a few observations on the Italian music; which may enable us to form a better judgment of our own.

If it be asked what language will admit of the best grammar, I answer, That of the people who reason best; and if it be asked what nation should have the best music, I should answer, That whose language is best adapted to music. This is what I have already established, and shall have farther occasion to confirm it during the course of this letter. Now, if there be in Europe a language adapted to music, it is certainly the Italian; for that language is soft, sonorous, harmonious, and more accented than any other; which four qualities are precisely those which are most proper for singing.

It is soft, because its articulations are simple, the collision of consonants is rare and never harsh;

† Not that there are not some very good violin-players in the orchestra at the opera: on the contrary, they are almost all such, taken separately, and when they do not pretend to play in concert.

harſh, and becauſe a great number of ſyllables being formed of vowels only, their frequent eliſions render its pronunciation eaſy and flowing. It is ſonorous, becauſe moſt of its vowels are clear, becauſe it hath no compound diphthongs, and few or no naſal vowels; and becauſe its articulations are eaſy, and diſtinguiſh clearly the ſound of the ſyllables; which, by that means, come forth preciſe and full. With regard to its harmony, which depends on its numbers and proſody as much as its ſimple ſounds, the advantage of the Italian language is manifeſt in this particular: for it is to be obſerved, that what renders a language harmonious and truly pictoreſque, depends leſs on the real force of the words, than on the diſtance there is from the ſoft and the ſtrong between the ſounds employed, and on the choice which might be made of them to deſcribe the images intended. This premiſed, let thoſe, who think the Italian language adapted only to objects of delicacy and tenderneſs, take the trouble to compare the two following ſtrophes from Taſſo.

Teneri ſdegni, e placide e tranquille
Repulſe, e cari vezzi, e liete paci,
Sorriſi, parolette, e dolce ſtille
Di pianto e ſoſpir, tronchi e molli bacci;
Fuſe tai coſe tutte, e poſcia unille,
Et al foce tempro di lente faci;
E ne formo quel ſi mirabil cinto
Di ch' ella aveva il bel fianco ſuccinto.

Chiama gl' abitator de l'ombre eterne
Il rauco tuon de la tartarea tromba;
Treman le ſpazioſe atre caverne.
E l'aer cieco a quel romor rimbomba;

Ne ſi ſtridendo mai da le ſuperne
Regioni del Cielo il folgor piomba,
Ne ſi ſcoſſa giammai trema la terra
Quando i vapori in ſen gravida ſerra.

And if they deſpair of rendering into French the agreeable harmony of the one, let them endeavour to expreſs the roughneſs and harſhneſs of the other.

To judge of theſe, it is not neceſſary to underſtand the language; it requires only a good ear and a ſincere heart. You will obſerve that the harſhneſs of the laſt ſtrophe is not ſurd or inarticulate, but very ſonorous; and that it is hard only with reſpect to the ear, and not difficult to pronounce; for the tongue can as eaſily articulate the *r*, whoſe repetition renders the laſt ſtrophe ſo harſh, as the *l*, which makes the firſt ſo ſmooth and flowing. In the French language, on the contrary, whenever we would give a peculiar hardneſs to our harmony, we are obliged to amaſs together a number of various conſonants that make the articulations difficult and harſh, which retards the progreſs of the air, and often obliges the muſic to move ſlow, when the words require it to move more than ordinary quick.

If I were largely to expatiate on this article, I might poſſibly ſhew, that the tranſpoſitions of words in the Italian language are much more favourable to melody than the didactic order of ours; and that the muſical phraſe unfolds itſelf in a more agreeable and intereſting manner, when the ſenſe of a paſſage, being long ſuſpended, is finiſhed by the verb with the cadence at the cloſe, than when the ſenſe is diſplayed as

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the words go on, thus gradually ſatisfying or ſating the deſire of the mind, while that of the ear is augmented in a contrary proportion to the end of the paſſage. I might alſo prove, that the art of ſuſpenſion and parentheſis, which the happy conſtruction of the language renders ſo familiar to the Italian muſic, is entirely unknown to ours; and that we have no other means to ſupply its place, but by ſilent pauſes, which are incompatible with ſinging, and which on theſe occaſions betray rather the poverty of the muſic than the reſources of the muſician.

It remains for me now to treat of accent; but this important point demands ſo profound a diſcuſſion, that it would be better to reſerve it for ſome abler hand. I proceed, therefore, to things more eſſential to my principal object; and ſhall endeavour to examine into the nature of our muſic itſelf.

The Italians pretend that our melody is flat and void of tune; all other nations alſo unanimouſly confirm their judgement in this particular *. On our part, we accuſe theirs of being capricious and barbarous †. I had much rather believe that one or the other were miſtaken, than be reduced to the neceſſity of ſaying, that in a country where arts and ſciences in general

* There was a time, ſays my Lord Shaftſbury, when the cuſtom of ſpeaking French had brought French muſic alſo into faſhion among us. But the Italian, exhibiting ſomething more agreeable to nature, preſently diſguſted us with the other, and made us perceive it to be as heavy, flat, and inſipid, as it is in fact.

† It ſeems theſe reproaches are much leſs violent ſince the Italian muſic hath been heard among us. Thus it is that this admirable muſic need only ſhew itſelf what it is, to juſtify itſelf againſt every thing that is advanced againſt it.

are arrived to an high degree of perfection, that of music is as yet unknown.

The least partial among us * contented themselves with saying, that both the Italian and French music were good, in their kind, and in their own language: but, besides that other nations did not subscribe to this comparison, it still remained to determine which of the two languages was the best adapted to music in itself. This is a question which was much agitated in France, but will never be so elsewhere; a question that can only be decided by an ear that is perfectly neuter, and which of course becomes daily more difficult of solution in the only country where the object of it can be problematical. I have made some experiments on this subject, which every one may repeat after me, and which appear to serve as a solution of it, at least with regard to melody; to which alone the whole dispute is in a manner reducible.

I took some of the most celebrated airs in both kinds of music; and divesting the one of its trills and perpetual cadences, the other of the under-notes which the composer does not take the trouble to write, but leaves to the judgement of the singer †, I solfa'd them exactly by

* Many persons condemn the total exclusion which the connoisseurs in music give, without hesitation, to the French music. These conciliating moderators would have no exclusive taste, just as if the love of what is good must necessarily work some regard for what is bad.

† This method was very much in favour of the French music; for the under-notes in the Italian, are no less essential to the melody, than those which are written down. The point is less what is written than what ought to be sung; and indeed this manner of writing notes ought to pass for a kind of abbreviation, whereas the cadences and trills in the French music

by note, without any ornament, and without adding any thing to the ſenſe or connection of the phraſe. I will not tell you the effect which the reſult of this compariſon had on my own mind, becauſe I ought to exhibit my reaſons, and not to impoſe my authority. I will only give you an account of the method I took to determine, ſo that, if you think it a good one, you may take the ſame to convince yourſelf. I muſt caution you, however, that this experiment requires more precautions than may at firſt appear neceſſary.

The firſt and moſt difficult of all, is to be impartial, and equitable, in your choice and judgement. The ſecond is, that in order to make this experiment, it is neceſſary for you to be equally acquainted with both ſtyles; otherwiſe that which ſhould happen to be moſt familiar, would perpetually preſent itſelf to the mind, to the prejudice of the other. Nor is this ſecond condition leſs difficult than the firſt: for among thoſe who are acquainted with both kinds of muſic, there is no heſitation of choice; and it is eaſy to perceive by the ridiculous arguments of thoſe who write againſt the Italian muſic, how little knowledge they have of that, or indeed of the art in general.

Add to this, that it is very eſſential to proceed in exact time: but I foreſee that this caution, though ſuperfluous in any other country, would be uſeleſs in this; and that this omiſſion alone

ſic are requiſite, if you will, to the taſte, but are by no means eſſential to the melody: they are a kind of paint, which ſerves to hide its deformity without removing it, and which ſerves only to render it the more ridiculous to the ears of good judges.

neceſſarily carries with it an incompetency of judgment.

Taking all theſe precautions, the character of each kind of muſic cannot fail of declaring itſelf; when it would be difficult not to clothe the paſſages with thoſe ideas which agree with them; and indeed not to add, at leaſt mentally, thoſe turns and ornaments, which may be refuſed them in ſinging. We ſhould not reſt the matter, alſo, upon a ſingle experiment; for one air may pleaſe more than another, without determining the preference of the kind of muſic; nor is it without a great number of trials that a reaſonable judgement is to be formed. Beſides, in taking away the words, we take away the moſt important part of the melody, which is expreſſion; ſo that all that can be determined, is, whether the modulation be good, and the tune natural and beautiful. All this ſhews how difficult it is to take ſufficient precautions againſt prepoſſeſſions, and how far reaſon is neceſſary to qualify us to judge properly in matters of taſte.

I made another trial, which requires leſs precaution, and which will yet appear probaly more deciſive. I gave to ſome Italian muſicians the fineſt airs of Lulli, and to ſome French ones the ſelect airs of Leo and Pergoleſe; and I remarked, that, though the latter were very far from entering into the true taſte of theſe pieces, they were ſenſible nevertheleſs of their melody, and made out of them in their manner agreeable and tuneful paſſages. But the Italians ſolfa'd our moſt pathetic airs, without diſcovering either paſſage or tune: they found no muſic at all in them, but ſaw only a ſucceſſion of notes placed without choice or deſign; they ſung them indeed exactly

exactly as you would read Arabic words written in French characters *.

My third experiment was this, I had an opportunity of seeing at Venice, an Armenian, a man of understanding, who had never before heard any music; and to whom were exhibited in the same concert, a French piece which began with these words,

Temple sacre, sejour tranquille;

and an air of Galuppi's which begins thus,

Voi che languite senza speranza.

Both the one and the other were sung, very indifferently for a Frenchman, and badly for an Italian, by a man accustomed solely to French music, and at that time an enthusiast for Rameau. I observed, that my Armenian, during the French song, expressed much more surprise than pleasure; but every body took notice that his countenance and eyes brightened up, and that he was instantly affected with the very first notes of the Italian. He appeared indeed enchanted, and gave himself up entirely to the impressions of the music; the simple sounds, for he understood hardly any thing of the language, giving him an evident delight. From that time he would never listen to a French air.

But without going abroad for examples, have not we many persons among ourselves; who being acquainted only with our own operas, really

* Our musicians pretend to deduce a great advantage from this difference. *We can execute the Italian music*, say they with their usual vanity, *and the Italians cannot execute ours; therefore our music is better than theirs.* They do not see that they ought to deduce a consequence directly contrary; and say, *Therefore the Italians have a melody, and we have none.*

really conceived they had no manner of taſte for ſinging, and were undeceived only by the Italian interludes? They imagined they did not love muſic for the very reaſon that proved they liked only that which was really ſuch.

I muſt confeſs, that ſo many facts made me doubtful of the exiſtence of French melody; and raiſed a ſuſpicion that it was only a kind of modulated full chorus, that had nothing in it agreeable of itſelf; pleaſing only by the help of certain adventitious and arbitrary ornaments, and to ſuch only as were prepoſſeſſed in its favour. For we find, that our muſic is hardly ſupportable even to our own ears, when it is executed by indifferent voices, who cannot make the moſt of it. It requires a Fel and a Jeliotte to ſing French muſic: but every voice is good for the Italian; becauſe the beauties of the latter are in the muſic itſelf, whereas thoſe of the French, if it has any, depend all on the abilities of the finger *.

There are three things which to me appear to concur in the perfection of Italian melody. The firſt

* It is an error to imagine that the Italian ſingers have in general leſs voice than the French: On the contrary, it is neceſſary that they ſhould have ſtronger lungs, and be more harmonious, to make themſelves heard throughout the ſpacious theatres of Italy, without ſtopping to manage the voice as the Italian muſic requires. The French ſong requires the utmoſt effect of the lungs, and the whole extent of the voice. *Stronger, louder*, cry our ſinging maſters, *ſend forth the ſounds, open the mouth, give out all your voice.* On the other hand, the Italian maſters ſay, *Softer, force nothing, ſing eaſy; let your notes be ſoft and flowing; reſerve the loud exertions for thoſe rare occaſions when it is neceſſary to ſtrike and amaze.* Now, it appears to me, that if people muſt make themſelves heard, thoſe have the ſtrongeſt voices who can do it without being under the neceſſity of ſcreaming.

firſt is the ſweetneſs of the language; which, making all its inflexions eaſy, leaves the genius of the muſician at liberty to make a more exquiſite choice, to give a greater variety to his combinations, and aſſign to every actor a particular turn, ſo that each may have his own peculiar manner to diſtinguiſh him from the reſt.

The ſecond is the boldneſs of the modulations, which, although leſs ſervilely prepared than ours, are rendered more agreeable in being rendered more ſenſible, and without giving any harſhneſs to the ſong, and a lively energy to the expreſſion. It is by means of this, the muſician, paſſing ſuddenly from one key or mode to another, and ſuppreſſing when neceſſary the intermediate and pedantic tranſitions, is capable of expreſſing thoſe reſerves, interruptions, and parentheſes, which are the language of the impetuous paſſions; and which the glowing Metaſtaſio, Porpora, Galuppi, Cocchi, Jumella, Perez, and Terra-deglia, have ſo often and ſo ſucceſsfully employed; while our lyric poets know juſt as little of them as our muſicians.

The third advantage, and that which gives to melody its greateſt effect, is the extreme exactneſs of time which is obſervable in the graveſt as well as the livelieſt movements: an exactneſs which renders the ſinging animated and intereſting, the accompaniments lively and flowing; which really multiplies the tunes, by making in one combination of ſounds as many different melodies as there are methods of ſcanning them: an exactneſs which conveys every ſentiment to the heart, and every image to the underſtanding; which furniſhes the muſician with the means of giving to words all imaginable characters,

ters, many of which we have no idea of *, and which renders the movements proper to expreſs all thoſe characters †, or a ſingle movement proper to contraſt and change the character at the pleaſure of the compoſer.

Such appear to me the ſources from which the Italian muſic derives its charms and energy: to which may be added, a new and very ſtrong proof of the advantage of its melody, in that it does not require, ſo often as ours, thoſe frequent reverſions of harmony, which give the thorough-baſs a real under-tune. Thoſe who find ſuch great beauties in the French melody, would do well to tell us to which of theſe two things it is obliged, or to ſhew us the advantages by which they are ſupplied.

When one firſt becomes acquainted with the Italian melody, it ſeems to conſiſt altogether of graces, and one is apt to think it calculated only to expreſs ſentiments that are pleaſing and agreeable; but when one comes to be a little more acquainted with its pathetic and tragic character, one is ſurpriſed at the force and energy which

* Not to depart from the comic ſtyle, the only one known at Paris, I ſhall mention the following airs, *Quando Sciolto avro ili contratto*, &c. *Io o un veſpajo*, &c. *O queſto o quel o t'ai a riſolvere*, &c. *A un guſto da ſtordire*, &c. *Stizzoſo mio, Stizzoſo*, &c. *Io ſono una donzella*, &c. *Quanti maeſtri, quanti dottori*, &c. *I ſbirri gia lo aſpetano*, &c. *Ma dunque il teſtamento*, &c. *Senti me, ſe brami ſ're. O che riſa, che piacere*, &c. all characteriſtic airs, of which the French muſic hath not the firſt elements, and of which it is incapable of expreſſing a ſingle word.

† I ſhall content myſelf with citing only one example, which is a very ſtriking one; this is the air *Se pur d'un infelice*, &c. in the intriguing chambermaid. A very pathetic air to a very lively movement; to which there is only wanting a voice to ſing it, an orcheſtra to accompany it, ears to hear it, and the ſecond part, which ought by no means to be ſuppreſſed.

which the art of the compoſers beſtow on it in their grand pieces of muſic. It is by the aid of theſe ſcientific modulations, of this ſimple and pure harmony, theſe lively and brilliant accompaniments, that their divine performances enrapture or harrow up the ſoul, ſeducing the auditor out of himſelf, and forcing from him thoſe external marks of tranſport with which our inſipid operas are never honoured.

How is it that the muſician is capable of producing theſe great effects? Is it to be done merely by contraſting the movements, by the multiplication of concords, notes, and parts? Is it by dint of amaſſing deſigns on deſigns, or inſtruments on inſtruments? All this farrago, which is a bad ſubſtitute where genius is wanting, is enough to ſtifle inſtead of animating the muſic, and prevent its being intereſting by dividing the attention.

Whatever harmony may ariſe from a number of parts being well ſung together, the effect of this fine ſinging would vaniſh the moment the different parts were heard at the ſame time; there remains a ſucceſſion of concords, which, however boaſted, is always cold and liſeleſs when it is not animated by melody: in ſo much that the more the ſeveral parts are huddled together, the leſs agreeable the muſic; becauſe it is impoſſible that the ear can attend to ſeveral melodies at the ſame time, while, the one effacing the other, the reſult of the whole muſt neceſſarily be noiſe and confuſion. In order that a piece ſhould become intereſting, and convey to the ſoul the ſentiments it is intended to excite, it is requiſite that all the parts ſhould concur to ſtrengthen the expreſſion of the ſubject; that

that the harmony ſhould ſerve only to render it more nervous; that the accompaniment ſhould embelliſh, without hiding or diſfiguring it; that the baſs ſhould, by a ſimple and uniform progreſs, ſerve in ſome ſhape as a guide both to the ſinger and the auditor, without either perceiving it; in a word, it requires that the whole ſhould convey but one ſimple melody to the ear, and but one idea to the mind.

This unity of melody appears to me a rule as indiſpenſible, and not leſs important in muſic, as the unity of action in a tragedy; being founded on the very ſame principle, and directed to the ſame object. Thus all good Italian compoſers conform to it with a degree of ſolicitude that borders on affectation; and if we reflect ever ſo little upon it, we ſhall preſently perceive that it is from this circumſtance their muſic derives its principal effects. It is in this great rule that we muſt look for the cauſe of thoſe frequent accompaniments in uniſon which are remarkable in the Italian muſic, and which, by ſtrengthening the idea of the tune, render the ſounds more ſoft and mellow, and leſs fatiguing for the voice. Theſe uniſons are impracticable in our muſic, unleſs it be in ſome characters of airs ſelected and purpoſely adapted to them. A pathetic French air would be inſupportable, if accompanied in this manner; becauſe our vocal and inſtrumental muſic being characteriſtically different, we cannot, without offending both melody and taſte, apply to one the ſame turns as are proper for the other; not to reckon that the meaſure being always vague and indeterminate, particularly in the ſlower airs, the inſtruments and the voice would never

agree,

agree, or proceed ſufficiently in concert to produce an agreeable effect.

Another beauty which reſults from theſe uniſons, is that of giving a more ſenſible expreſſion to the melody, ſometimes by adding ſudden ſtrength to the inſtruments on particular paſſages; ſometimes by ſoftening them; and at others, by giving them a bold and animated ſtroke, which the voice cannot reach, and which the audience, being thus artfully deceived, never fails to impute to it, when the orcheſtra is capable of ſtriking it out properly. Hence ariſes that perfect coincidence of the ſymphony with the ſinging, which occaſions all the ſtrokes that are admired in the one, to be only developements of the other; ſo that it is only in the vocal part that we are to look for the ſource of all the beauties of the accompaniment.

This accompaniment is ſo intimately connected with the ſinging, and ſo exactly applicable to the words, that it ſeems to direct the play, and to dictate the geſtures of the actors *; ſo that ſome of them who might not be able to play their parts merely from the words, will play them very juſtly from the muſic; becauſe it acts in the quality of interpreter.

Beſides this, it is a great thing that the Italian accompaniments are always in uniſon with the voice. There are two caſes indeed pretty frequent, wherein the muſician ſeparates them.

* Numerous examples might be given from the interludes that have appeared the preſent year; among others, in the air *A un guſto da ſtordire* in the Muſic-maſter; in that of *Son Padrone* of the Vain Woman: in that of *Vi ſto ben* in Tracollo; in that of *Tu non penſi no ſignora* in the Bohemian; and in almoſt all thoſe which require acting.

The one is, when the voice running lightly over the harmonious chords, fixes the attention ſo much, that the accompaniment cannot partake of it: yet even there ſo much ſimplicity is given to this accompaniment, that the ear, affected only by agreeable concords, does not perceive any thing in it to divert its attention. The other caſe requires ſomething more to make it perfectly underſtood.

When the muſician underſtands his art, ſays the ingenious author of the letter on the deaf and dumb, *the parts of the accompaniment concur to ſtrengthen the expreſſion of the ſinger, or to add new ideas when the ſubject requires it and the ſinger cannot give them.* This paſſage appears to contain a very uſeful precept; and thus I think it ſhould be underſtood.

If the ſong is of ſuch a nature as to require any additions, or, as our old muſicians ſay, any diminutions, which may add to the expreſſion or agreeableneſs without deſtroying the unity of the melody; ſo that the ear, which perhaps would blame thoſe additions if made by the voice, would approve them and be agreeably affected by them in the accompaniment, without ceaſing to be attentive to the ſinging; in ſuch a caſe the able muſician will, by managing them properly, and diſpoſing them with taſte, embelliſh his ſubject, and render it more expreſſive without taking from its unity: and though the accompaniment may not be exactly the ſame as the part ſung, they will both have the ſame tune and the ſame melody.

If the ſenſe of the words convey an acceſſory idea, which the tune cannot expreſs, the muſician will ſupply it in his pauſes, or at intervals,

in

in ſuch a manner that he will preſent it to the mind of the auditor, without diverting his attention from the ſong. The advantage will be ſtill greater, if this acceſſory idea may be rendered by a forced and thorough accompaniment, which ſhould make rather a ſlight murmur than a real tune, ſuch as the noiſe of a river or the confuſed whiſtling of birds: for then the compoſer may ſeparate the ſong entirely from the accompaniment; and, devoting the latter to the acceſſory idea, may diſpoſe it in ſuch a manner as to throw frequent light on the orcheſtra, in carefully obſerving that the ſymphony ſhould always be directed by the ſinging part, which depends more on the art of the compoſer, than on the execution of the inſtruments: but this requires the moſt conſummate experience, in order to avoid a duplicity of melody.

This is all that the obſervation of unity can furniſh the taſte of the muſician with, to ornament the ſong, or render it more expreſſive, whether by embelliſhing the principal ſubject, or by annexing to it any other which may be ſubordinate. But to play in different parts, the violins on one ſide, the flutes on another, and the baſſoons on a third, each with a particular deſign, and almoſt without any relation to each other, and to call this chaos of noiſe by the name of muſic, is an equal inſult on the ear and the judgment of the auditors.

Another thing, which is not leſs contrary to the rule I have laid down than the multiplication of parts, is the abuſe or rather the uſe of fugues, imitations, double deſigns, and other capricious and conventional beauties; which

have no other merit than the difficulty of execution, and which have been all invented in the infancy of the art, to give eclat to the ſcholar during the want of genius. I do not affirm it to be altogether impoſſible to preſerve the unity of melody in a fugue, by artfully leading the attention of the auditor from one part to another, in proportion as the ſubject requires: but this is ſo laborious and difficult, that hardly any perſon is capable of effecting it, and is at the ſame time ſo ungrateful a taſk, that the ſucceſs is no indemnification for the fatigue of the attempt. All this tending only to make a noiſe, like moſt of our admired choruſes *, is equally unworthy the pen of a man of genius, and the attention of a man of taſte. With regard to counter-fugues, double-fugues, and other difficult abſurdities which the ear cannot bear nor reaſon juſtify, they are evidently nothing but the remains of barbariſm and falſe taſte, which ſubſiſt, like the porches of our Gothic churches, only to reflect diſgrace on thoſe who had the patience to conſtruct them.

There was a time when Italy itſelf was involved in barbariſm; even after the revival of the other arts in Europe, muſic advanced but ſlowly toward that purity of taſte, which it has acquired in the preſent times. We cannot indeed

* The Italians themſelves have not altogether ſhaken off this barbariſm. They ſtill pique themſelves on having noiſy muſic in their churches; celebrating maſſes and motets with four choirs, each on a different deſign: but the great maſters ſmile at all this farrago. I remember Terra-deglias, ſpeaking to me one day of ſeveral motets of his compoſition, in which he had introduced laboured choruſes, was aſhamed of his having made them ſo grand, and excuſed himſelf on account of his youth. Another time he ſaid to me, "Formerly I loved to make a noiſe, but at preſent I endeavour to make muſic."

deed give a worſe idea of what it then was, than by obſerving, that for a long time France and Italy * had but one ſpecies of muſic in common between them; and that the muſicians of both countries held a familiar correſpondence together; not without betraying, however, in thoſe early times, the ſeeds of that jealouſy which is inſeparable from conſcious inferiority. Lulli himſelf, alarmed at the arrival of Corelli, haſtened to get him baniſhed from France; which was by ſo much the more eaſy for him to do, as Corelli was by much the greater man, and of courſe the leſs of a courtier.

In the times when muſic had but juſt appeared in Europe, it had in Italy that ridiculous emphaſis of harmonical ſcience, thoſe predantic pretenſions to doctrine, which it ſo carefully preſerves at preſent among us, and by which we ſtill diſtinguiſh that methodical muſic, deſtitute of genius, invention and taſte, which is called in Paris *written muſic* by way of excellence, and which is at beſt good for nothing but to be written.

I do not deny, that, even ſince the Italians have arrived at a greater degree of perfection in the ſimplicity and purity of their melody, there remain ſtill among them ſome ſlight traces of

* The Abbe du Bos took a world of pains to compliment the Netherlands on their revival of muſic; and with juſtice, if we may give the name of muſic to a continual repetition of concords. But if harmony only be in the common baſs, and melody conſtitute the character of modern muſic, it not only took riſe in Italy, but there are ſome grounds to think, that in all our living languages the Italian muſic is the only one that hath real exiſtence. In the times of Orlando and Gondimel there were harmony and ſounds, Lulli added a little cadence; but Corelli, Buononcini, Vinci, and Pergoleſe, were the firſt that compoſed muſic.

fugues and other Gothic deſigns; and even ſometimes of double and treble melodies. I might cite ſeveral examples of this, from interludes well known, and among others that wretched piece at the end of *The vain woman*. But theſe things are foreign to the preſent eſtabliſhed character of the Italian muſic; we find none of them in their tragic pieces; and it would be as unjuſt to judge of the Italian opera from their farces, as it would be to judge of our French theatre from the *Impromptu de campagne*, or the *Baron de la Craſſe*.

Of all the parts of muſic, the moſt difficult to treat, without departing from the unity of the melody, is the duo; an article which merits a moment's attention. The author of the Letter on Omphale has already remarked that the duo is out of nature: for nothing is leſs natural than to ſee two perſons ſpeaking together for a certain time, either ſaying the ſame thing, or contradicting each other, without attending or replying to what is ſaid. And ſhould this ſuppoſition be admitted in ſome particular caſes, it is very certain that it can never be in tragedy; where ſuch indecorum is neither agreeable to the dignity of the perſonages who are ſpeaking, nor to the education they muſt be ſuppoſed to have received. Now the beſt way to avoid this abſurdity, is to convert the *duo* as much as poſſible into dialogue, and this firſt regards the poet. The muſician's province is to find a tune ſuitable to the ſubject, and diſtributed in ſuch a manner, that, each of the interlocutors ſpeaking alternately, the whole ſucceſſion of the dialogue will form only one ſimple melody; which, without changing the ſubject, or at leaſt without varying

rying the movement, ſhould paſs from one part to the other, without ceaſing to be the ſame, and without colliſion. When the two parts are joined together, which they ſhould be but very ſeldom, and never long together, it is neceſſary to fix on a tune capable of moving by thirds or ſixths, in which the ſecond part may have its effect without diverting the ear from the firſt. The harſhneſs of diſcords, and the piercing of reiterated tones, the fortiſſimo of the orcheſtra, ſhould be reſerved for thoſe moments of diſorder and tranſport, in which the actors, ſeeming to forget themſelves, communicate their raptures to the ſoul of the ſuſceptible ſpectator; cauſing them to experience the power of harmony properly managed. But theſe moments ought to be rare, and introduced with great art. It is requiſite that the ear and the heart ſhould be previouſly diſpoſed by ſoft and affecting muſic, in order to their readily entering into thoſe violent emotions: and it is as requiſite that they ſhould paſs with a rapidity accommodated to our weakneſs; for when the agitation is too ſtrong, it cannot laſt, and every thing that goes beyond nature is no longer affecting.

In ſaying what the duos ought to be, I have only ſaid exactly what they are in the Italian operas. If any perſon can hear a tragic duo ſung by two good Italian actors, and accompanied by a good orcheſtra, without being affected; if, for inſtance, he can liſten without tears to the affectionate parting of Mandane and Arbaces; I look upon him to be worthy of weeping at that of Lybia and Epaphus.

But, without inſiſting on tragic duos, a kind of muſic of which we have not even the idea at Paris,

Paris, I could cite a comic duo known to every body, and I will cite it boldly, as a model of ſinging, of unity of melody, of dialogue, and of taſte; to which nothing would in my opinion be wanting, if well executed, but hearers of ſufficient judgment to comprehend its beauties. This is the duo in the firſt act of *La Serva Padrona* beginning *Lo conoſco a quegl' ochiati*, &c. I acknowledge that there are few French muſicians capable of feeling all the beauties of this piece; and readily ſay of Pergoleſe, as Cicero did of Homer, a man muſt have made a conſiderable progreſs in his art to be pleaſed with reading him.

I hope, Sir, you will excuſe the length of this article, on account of its novelty, and the importance of its ſubject. I thought it my duty to expatiate a little on ſo eſſential a rule as that of the unity of melody; a rule of which no theoriſt that I know of hath as yet treated; which the Italian compoſers alone have felt and practiſed, poſſibly without ever inquiring into its exiſtence; and on which depend the ſweetneſs of the tune, the force of the expreſſion, and almoſt all the beauty of good muſic. Before I quit the ſubject, however, it remains for me to ſhew you ſome new advantages that reſult from it even to harmony itſelf, at the expence of which I ſeemed to give up every advantage to melody; and that the expreſſion of the tune gives room for that of the concords, in obliging the compoſer to an artful management of them.

You muſt remember, Sir, to have heard, in the interludes we had preſented laſt year, the ſon of the Italian manager, a boy about ten years of age, ſometimes accompany the opera.

We

We were ſtruck the firſt day with the effect produced by his little fingers on the accompaniment of the harpſichord, the whole piece appearing more exact and brilliant than when accompanied by the uſual player.

I immediately inquired into the reaſon of this difference; for I doubted not that the Sieur Noblet was a good harmoniſt, and accompanied very exactly: but gueſs my ſurpriſe, in obſerving the hands of this little muſician, to ſee that he never filled the accords, but ſuppreſſed a number of ſounds, and very often employed only two fingers, one of which was almoſt always on the octave of the baſs. How is this? thought I; can a complete piece of harmony have leſs effect than one that is mutilated? Our other players in giving all the ſounds make only a confuſed noiſe, while this with fewer ſounds makes more harmony, or at leaſt renders the accompaniment more ſenſible and agreeable. This was to me a perplexing problem; and I comprehended the importance of it ſtill better, when after ſeveral obſervations I ſaw the Italians all played in the ſame manner as little Bambin, and that this paucity of ſounds in their accompaniment muſt depend on the ſame principle as that which they affected in their diviſions.

I very well comprehended, that the baſs, being the foundation of all harmony, ought to prevail over the reſt; and that, when it is ſuppreſſed or covered by the other parts, it cauſes a confuſion that renders the harmony leſs clear and diſtinct. Hence I accounted for the Italians being ſo ſparing of the motion of the right hand, and having their left ſo long and ſo frequently on the octave

of

of the baſs; for their having ſo many double baſſes in their orcheſtras; and for their ſo often playing their fifths † with the baſs, inſtead of giving them another part, which the French never fail to do. But although this accounts for the accuracy of the conſonance, it does not account for its energy; and I preſently ſaw that there muſt be ſome more ſecret and delicate principle for that expreſſion which I remarked in the ſimplicity of the Italian harmony, while I found ours ſo complicated, cold, and enervate.

I then recollected that I had ſomewhere read, in a work of Rameau's, that each conſonance had its particular character; that is to ſay, a manner of affecting the ſoul peculiar to itſelf; that thus the effect of a third is not the ſame as that of a fifth, nor the effect of a fourth the ſame with that of a ſixth. In like, manner, the thirds and ſixths minor affect us differently from the thirds and ſixths major; which facts being admitted, it follows, that the diſſonances, and all poſſible intervals, are alſo in the ſame caſe. This is confirmed both by reaſon and experience; for, whenever the relations are different, the impreſſion cannot be the ſame.

Now, in reaſoning from this ſuppoſition, I thought I ſaw clearly that even two conſonances added together improperly, although agreeable to

† It is worth remarking to the orcheſtra of our opera, that, in the Italian muſic, the fifths ſeldom play their part, when it is in the octave of the baſs; though, perhaps, ours will diſdain to copy the Italians in this particular. But, can thoſe who conduct the orcheſtra be ignorant, that this defect of connection between the baſs and the higher parts renders the harmony too dry and hard?

to the rules of harmony, might even, in augmenting that harmony, mutually weaken, oppoſe, or divide each other's effects. If the whole effect of a fifth is neceſſary for the expreſſion I have occaſion for, I ſhould certainly riſk the weakening that expreſſion by a third ſound, which, dividing that fifth into two other intervals, would neceſſarily modify its effect by that of two thirds into which I had reſolved it: while even theſe thirds, tho' all together making a very good harmony, yet, being of a different ſpecies, they might reciprocally injure the expreſſion of each other. In like manner, if the ſimultaneous impreſſion of a fifth and two thirds be neceſſary, I ſhould weaken and alter that impreſſion very improperly by taking away one of the three ſounds forming the conſonance. The force of this reaſoning becomes more ſenſible when applied to diſſonance. Let us ſuppoſe, that I want all the hardneſs of the tritone, or all the inſipidity of a falſe fifth; an oppoſition, by the way, which ſhews how far different inverſions may change the effect: if, in ſuch a circumſtance, I ſay, inſtead of conveying to the ear the two ſingle ſounds which form the diſſonance, I ſhould take it in my head to join all thoſe which would agree with them, I ſhould add to the tritone a ſecond and a ſixth, and to the falſe fifth a ſixth and a third: that is, by introducing a new diſſonance, I ſhould at the ſame time introduce three conſonances, which would naturally tend to meliorate and weaken the effect, in rendering one of the accords leſs ſharp, and the other leſs flat. It is therefore a certain principle, founded in nature, that all muſic, in which the harmony is ſcrupulouſly full,

and

and the accompaniments or all the accords complete, muſt make a great deal of noiſe, but will have verry little expreſſion. This is exactly characteriſtic of the French muſic.

It is true, that, in the management of the accords and the parts, the choice is very difficult, and requires great experience and taſte to diſpoſe them always properly: but if there be any rule to aſſiſt the compoſer on ſuch an occaſion, it is certainly that of the unity of melody, which I have endeavoured to eſtabliſh; and which is perfectly agreeable to the character of the Italian muſic, and accounts for the ſweetneſs of their ſinging, as well as the force of its expreſſion.

It follows from all this, that, after having well ſtudied the elementary rules of harmony, the muſician ought not to be inconſiderately prodigal of it; nor think himſelf a maſter of compoſition, becauſe he knows how to fill up the accords. On the contrary, before he ſits down to compoſe, he ought to apply himſelf to the more tedious and difficult ſtudy of the different impreſſions which the conſonances, diſſonances, and all the accords, make on a good ear; and ſhould often reflect, that, the great art of a compoſer conſiſts rather in knowing what ſounds may properly be ſuppreſſed, than thoſe which ſhould be exerted.

It is only by a conſtant ſtudy of the maſterpieces of Italy, that he can acquire this exquiſite choice, if nature hath given him taſte and genius enough to perceive the neceſſity of it: for the difficulties of the art appear only to ſuch as are formed to ſurmount them; and theſe never looking with contempt on the void ſpaces of a part,

but

but, ſeeing the facility with which a ſcholar may fill them up, are led to inveſtigate the reaſons of that deceitful ſimplicity, which is by ſo much the more admirable, as it hides thoſe prodigies under an apparent negligence, and as the *arte che tutto fa, nulla ſi ſcuopre.*

Such appears to me the cauſe of the ſurpriſing effects produced by the harmony of the Italian muſic, although much leſs charged than ours, which produces hardly any effects worth notice. It is of much leſs ſignification that the harmony ſhould be full, than that it ſhould be filled with taſte and diſcernment. Not that it is neceſſary for a muſician to be able to make all theſe reflections, in order to determine his choice: it is enough that he is ſenſible of their reſult. Men of taſte and genius will diſcover theſe things by their effects; it belongs to a philoſopher only to inveſtigate the reaſons why ſuch things produce thoſe effects.

If you caſt an eye over our modern compoſitions, and particularly if you hear them played, you will preſently acknowledge, that our muſicians have ſo little comprehended this matter, that they have taken a method totally contrary to arrive at the ſame end: and if I may venture to ſpeak my opinion ingenuouſly, I find that the greater advances our muſic makes toward apparent perfection, it grows in fact the worſe.

It was, perhaps, neceſſary for it to reach its preſent ſtate, to accuſtom our ears inſenſibly to reject the prejudices of habit, and to get a taſte for other airs than thoſe with which our nurſes uſed to ſing us to ſleep; but I foreſee that, in order to bring it even to that degree of mediocrity

it is capable of, we muſt go back and take it up again in that ſtate wherein it was left by Lulli. It muſt be admitted, that the harmony of that celebrated muſician is more perfect; that his baſs is more natural and flowing; that his ſubject is better purſued; that his accompaniments being leſs charged, riſe more naturally, and vary leſs from the ſubject; that his recitative is leſs affected, and of courſe much better than ours. This is confirmed by the taſte of the execution: for the ancient recitative was ſung by the actors of thoſe times in a very different manner from what it is at preſent. It was more lively, and leſs drawling; the actors ſung leſs, and declaimed more *. The cadences and trills are multiplied in ours; ſo that it is become feeble and languiſhing, and has hardly any thing to diſtinguiſh it from what we are pleaſed to call *air*.

As I am fallen now on the ſubject of air and recitative, you will permit me, Sir, to finiſh this letter by ſome obſervations on both the one and the other; which may, perhaps, afford ſome uſeful ecclairciſſements toward the ſolution of the problem in queſtion.

One may judge of the idea our muſicians have of the conſtruction of an opera, by the ſingularity of their vocabulary. Thoſe grand pieces of Italian muſic which raviſh and delight the ſoul, thoſe maſter-pieces of genius which draw forth our tears, deſcribing the moſt lively images,

* We have a proof of this in the time of the repreſentation of the operas of Lulli; which is much longer now than formerly, according to the relation of thoſe who remember to have ſeen them a great many years ago. Hence it is, that, every time they are revived, they are obliged to be conſiderably mutilated.

ges, and exhibiting the moſt intereſting ſituations, at once filling the ſoul with all the paſſions they expreſs; theſe the French call *Ariettes*. At the ſame time, they give the name of *airs* to thoſe little inſipid catches, which they mix with the ſcenes of the opera; reſerving the ſoliloquies by way of excellence to thoſe drawling and tireſome lamentations, which would not fail to ſet the whole audience aſleep, if they were ſung without ſcreaming.

In the Italian operas, all the airs ariſe out of the circumſtances of the ſcene, and make part of the buſineſs of it. Sometimes we hear an enraged father, who imagines he ſees the ghoſt of a ſon, whom he hath unjuſtly put to death, come to upbraid him with his cruelty; ſometimes it is a mild and benevolent prince, who, compelled to do an act of ſeverity, begs of the gods to deprive him of his crown and empire; or to give him an heart leſs ſuſceptible of the feelings of humanity. Here we have a tender mother bathed in tears of joy, on the recovery of a ſon who was ſuppoſed to be dead. There we hear the language of impaſſioned lovers; not indeed ſtuffed with inſipid and puerile conceits of flames and darts and chains; but tragical, ſpirited, interrupted, and ardent, ſuch as is conformable to the expreſſion of impetuous paſſions. It is worth while on ſuch language to beſtow all the riches of a muſic full of force and expreſſion, and to enhance the energy of the poetry by that of the harmony.

The words of our ariettes, on the contrary, always detached from the buſineſs of the ſcene, are only a miſerable jargon, which one is generally happy in not being able to hear plain

enough to underſtand. They are in ſhort only a collection of a ſmall number of the moſt ſonorous words in our language, thrown together by chance, turned and twiſted about into all manner of forms, except that in which they might be jumbled into a meaning. It is on theſe impertinent trifles that our muſicians exhauſt their taſte and knowledge, and our actors waſte their geſtures and lungs; it is at ſuch extravagant pieces as theſe that our women of faſhion affect to die away with admiration and ecſtaſy. A proof indeed the moſt convincing, that the French muſic is incapable of expreſſion or deſcription, is, that it cannot diſplay the few beauties of which it is ſuſceptible, except on words that have no meaning.

And yet to hear the French people ſpeak of their muſic, one would imagine it was in their operas that the grand images and paſſions were exhibited, and that ariettes were to be found only in the Italian operas; in which the very name of Ariette, and the ridiculous thing it ſerves to expreſs, are equally unknown.

We are not to be ſurpriſed, however, at the groſſneſs of this prepoſſeſſion: the Italian muſic hath no enemies even in France, except among thoſe who know nothing of the matter; every one of thoſe who have applied themſelves to the ſtudy of it, even with a profeſſed view to cenſure it, having preſently become its moſt zealous admirers *.

Next to the ariettes, which conſtitute the triumph

* It is not in favour of the French muſic, that thoſe who deſpiſe it are ſuch as are beſt acquainted with it: for it is as ridiculous on examination, as it is intolerable to the ear.

triumph of modern taſte at Paris, come the famous ſoliloquies which are ſo much admired in the old operas. On this ſubject, it is to be remarked, that our fineſt airs are all ſoliloquies; and this becauſe our actors having no dumb ſhew, and the muſic indicating no geſture, nor deſcribing any ſituation, the perſon who is ſilent muſt be at a loſs what to do with himſelf, while the other is ſinging.

The drawling nature of our language, the little flexibility of our voices, and the lamentable tone which prevails perpetually in our operas, occaſion almoſt all our ſoliloquies to be ſet to a ſlow movement; and as the meaſure is neither perceived in the ſinging, in the baſs, nor in the accompaniment, nothing can be more heavy, drawling, and tedious, than thoſe fine ſoliloquies, which every body affects to ſing and admire. They ſhould be mournful, but are only tireſome; they ſhould affect the heart, but they only hurt the ear. The Italians are more dexterous in the management of their adagio: for when the time is ſo ſlow that there is any danger of weakening the ſenſe of the meaſure, they make their baſs proceed by equal notes, which mark the movement; while the accompaniment is marked alſo by ſubdiviſions of the notes; which keeping the voice and ear in tune, render the whole more agreeable and particularly nervous from ſuch preciſion. But the nature of the French ſinging takes away even this reſource from our compoſers: for when the actor is obliged to keep time, he can no longer diſplay his voice and action, dwell on his notes, ſwell and lengthen them at pleaſure, nor ſcream till he ſtuns you, and of courſe cannot be applauded.

But what ſtill more efficaciouſly prevents a tireſome monotony in the Italian tragedies, is the advantage they have of expreſſing all their ſentiments, and deſcribing all their characters, in ſuch a meaſure and movement as is moſt agreeable to the compoſer. As to our melody, which is in itſelf totally inexpreſſive, it derives all its expreſſion from the movement which is given it; in a ſlow meaſure it is ſad and lamentable, in a lively meaſure it is gay or furious, and in a moderate meaſure grave and ſolemn. The tune is hardly of any effect; the meaſure alone, or, to ſpeak more properly, the degree of time, determines its character. But the Italian muſic poſſeſſes in every movement expreſſions for all characters, and pictures for all objects. If the muſician pleaſes, it is ſorrowful with a briſk movement, and gay with a ſlow one; changing its character, as I have already obſerved, on any movement, at the pleaſure of the compoſer. This gives him a greater facility in contriving his contraſts, without depending altogether on the poet, or expoſing himſelf to inconſiſtencies.

Such is the ſource of that prodigious variety, which the great maſters of Italy have diſplayed in their operas, without ever departing from nature: a variety which prevents all monotony, languor, and tedioufneſs; and which the French muſicians cannot imitate, becauſe their movements are preſcribed by the ſenſe of the words, and they cannot depart from them without running the riſk of falling into ridiculous inconſiſtences. With reſpect to recitative, which it remains for me to ſpeak of; it appears neceſſary, in order to form a right judgment of it, to know

firſt

firſt preciſely what it is: for hitherto I know not that any of thoſe who have diſputed about it have ever thought of defining it.

I know not, Sir, what idea you may have annexed to that word: for my part, I call recitative an harmonious declamation; that is to ſay, a declamation whoſe inflexions are made by harmonic intervals. Hence it follows, that as every language has a declamation peculiar to itſelf, ſo it ought to have a peculiar recitative: not that this prevents our making a very proper compariſon between one recitative and another, in order to ſee which is the better of the two, or which is beſt adapted to the ſubject.

The recitative is neceſſary in lyric dramas, 1*ſt*, In order to connect the action, and preſerve the unity of the piece. 2*dly*, To ſet off the airs, the continuance of which would be inſupportable. 3*dly*, To expreſs a multitude of things, which cannot or ought not to be expreſſed by muſical tunes.

Simple declamation cannot agree with all this in a lyric performance, becauſe the tranſition from ſpeaking to ſinging, and in particular from ſinging to ſpeaking, is too great not to be offenſive to the ear: it forms a contraſt alſo, which deſtroys the illuſion, and conſequently renders it unintereſting; for there is a kind of probability to be obſerved even in an opera, by rendering the converſation ſo uniform, that the whole may be taken at leaſt for an hypothetical language.

Add to this, that the aſſiſtance of the accords increaſes the energy of harmonious declamation, and advantageouſly makes up for what is leſs natural in the ſounds. It is evident, according to theſe

theſe notions, that the beſt recitative in any language whatever, if it hath the other requiſites, is that which comes the neareſt to ſpeaking. And if any one ſhould be found which approached it ſo nearly as to be taken for ſimple declamation, and yet, at the ſame time, preſerve its proper harmony, we might boldly pronounce that ſuch recitative was carried to the higheſt perfection of which it is capable.

Let us examine now, according to this rule, what is called *recitative* in France; and then, pray, tell me what relation you find between ſuch recitative and our declamation? How can you ever conceive, that the French language, whoſe accent is ſo very ſimple, ſo plain, ſo void of tune, can be properly expreſſed in the noiſy and ſcreaming ſounds of our recitative? How can you ſtill leſs imagine there is any relation between the ſoft inflections of our ſpeech, and thoſe loud and ſwelling ſounds, or rather thoſe perpetual ſcreams, which form the noiſy compound of that part of our muſic which we call *airs?* Deſire any perſon, who knows how to read, to recite, for example, the four firſt verſes of the famous ſoliloquy of Iphigenia. You will diſcover only ſome ſlight inequalities, ſome feeble inflections of voice in a tranquil recital, that hath nothing lively or paſſionate, nothing that ſhould engage the reader to raiſe or lower the voice. Let one of our actreſſes recite afterwards the ſame words after the notes of the muſician, and try, if you can, to ſupport her extravagant ſcreaming, while ſhe runs up and down every moment through the whole extent of her voice, and ſuſpends the recital moſt abſurdly to *wire-draw the fine tones* on ſyllables that

that have no meaning and form no ſtop in the ſenſe.

Add to this, the trills, ſhakes, &c. that occur every moment, and then tell me what analogy there is between the words and all this tawdry frippery of ſounds; between true declamation and this pretended recitative. I ſhould be glad at leaſt to know on what grounds can be founded any reaſonable boaſt of that marvellous French recitative, whoſe invention is the glory of Lulli.

It is, indeed, pleaſant enough to ſee the partizans for French muſic entrench themſelves behind the character of their language, and throw the defects upon that which they dare not impute to their idol; while nothing is more evident, than that the recitative which would beſt ſuit the French tongue, is diametrically oppoſite to that which is in preſent uſe. It is plain, it ought to move by very ſmall intervals; that there ſhould be little elevation and ſinking of voice, few continued ſounds, never any roaring, much leſs ſcreaming; nothing, in particular, that reſembles tune, and a very ſmall inequality in the length or ſtrength or height of the notes. In a word, true French recitative, if it were poſſible to have one, is to be acquired only by taking a route directly contrary to that of Lulli and his ſucceſſors; a route which our French compoſers, ſo vain of their falſe knowledge, and ſo far from having a taſte for the true, will not ſoon attempt, and probably never will diſcover.

I might here ſhew you, by examples from the Italian recitative, that all the conditions, which I have ſuppoſed neceſſary to conſtitute a good one, are to be found in that alone; that it poſ-

poſſeſſes at once all the vivacity of declamation, and all the energy of harmony; that it may proceed as faſt as ſimple ſpeaking, and be as melodious as ſinging; that it may mark all the inflections with which the moſt vehement paſſions animate diſcourſe, without forcing the voice of the ſinger, or ſtunning the ears of the auditor.

I might ſhew you how, by the aid of a particular fundamental progreſs, the modulations of the recitative may be multiplied in a manner peculiar to itſelf, and which contributes to diſtinguiſh the airs; in which it is neceſſary, to preſerve the graces of the melody, to change the tone leſs frequently. I might ſhew you, in particular, how, in order to give a paſſion time to diſplay all its emotions, the orcheſtra might be made, by the help of a ſymphony artfully managed, to expreſs, by varied and pathetic tunes, what the actor cannot poſſibly recite; a maſterſtroke in the art of compoſing; by which the muſician may join, in a forced recitative *, the moſt affecting melody to all the vehemence of declamation, without confounding either the one or the other.

I might indeed diſplay to you innumerable beauties that are to be found in this admirable recitative; of which in France are told as many abſurd ſtories, as it occaſions falſe cenſures; as if any perſon could take upon them to pronounce

* I was in hopes the Sieur Caffarelli would have given us, at the *concert ſpirituel*, ſome pieces of the grand recitative and pathetic air, to let our pretended connoiſſeurs for once hear what they have ſo long taken upon them to judge of; but his reaſons for declining it, convince me that he is a better judge of the capacity of his audience than I am.

nounce the recitative good or bad, without perfectly underſtanding the language peculiar to it.

But in order to enter minutely into theſe particulars, it would be neceſſary for me in a manner to form a new dictionary, and to be perpetually inventing new terms to exhibit to the French reader thoſe ideas which are at preſent ſo little known to them, that my whole diſcourſe would be unintelligible. To be underſtood, it is requiſite to ſpeak the language they underſtand, and of courſe the language of all other arts and ſciences except that of muſic. I ſhall not deſcend therefore to treat this ſubject ſo circumſtantially; as it would convey no inſtruction to the reader, and might give them reaſon to preſume I owed the apparent validity of my arguments to their ignorance of them. It is for the ſame reaſon I ſhall not attempt to draw the parallel, propoſed this winter in a paper addreſſed to the Little Prophet and his adverſaries, between the two pieces of Italian and French muſic therein mentioned. The Italian piece, undiſtinguiſhed in Italy among a thouſand others equally, or more maſterly, is ſo little known at Paris, that few perſons can purſue the compariſon; and I ſhould only write for thoſe few who are already informed of what I ſhould tell them. But, with regard to the French piece, I will make a ſhort analyſis of it with the greater pleaſure, as it is a performance conſecrated by the unanimous ſuffrages of the whole nation, and I need be under no apprehenſion of being charged with partiality in making it my choice, or of wanting to miſlead the judgement of my readers by means of a ſubject little known.

As

As I cannot alſo enter into an examination of this performance, without adopting the ſpecies of muſic, at leaſt hypothetically; I ſhall in this give the French muſic all the advantage which reaſon will oblige me to deprive it of in the courſe of this letter. I muſt judge of it according to its own rules; ſo that, ſhould the piece be as perfect as it is pretended, nothing more can be concluded from it, than that it is a good piece of French muſic; which will not hinder us from juſtly concluding, if the ſpecies be in itſelf demonſtrated bad, that it is abſolutely a bad piece of muſic. Admitting, however, for the preſent, that the ſpecies be good, I proceed to inquire only whether the piece in queſtion be good in its kind.

To do this, I ſhall endeavour to analyze in few words the celebrated ſoliloquy of Armida; beginning with, *Enfin il eſt en ma puiſſance*; which paſſes for a maſter-piece of declamation, and which our greateſt maſters themſelves fix upon as the moſt perfect model of French recitative.

I ſhall, in the firſt place, obſerve, that M. Rameau hath cited it very juſtly as an example of exact and well connected modulation: but this encomium applied to the piece in queſtion is really a ſatire; and M Rameau would himſelf be very cautious of meriting a ſimilar elogium in the like circumſtances: for what can be conceived ſo improper as this ſcholaſtic regularity in a ſcene wherein the contraſt of ſuch oppoſite paſſions as rage and tenderneſs put the actreſs and audience in the moſt lively agitation? Armida comes on in a fury to ſtab her enemy. At ſight of him, ſhe heſitates, ſhe is affected with ten-

tenderneſs, and the dagger falls from her hands: ſhe forgets all her deſigns of vengeance; but never once forgets, even for a moment, the regularity of her modulation. The reſerves, the interruptions, the intellectual tranſitions, with which the poet furniſhes the muſician, are never once laid hold of by the latter.

The heroine ends her ſpeech with adoring him whom ſhe was going to aſſaſſinate in the beginning of it; the muſician ends *E ſi mi*, as he began, without ever having once inſerted, in the declamation of the actreſs, the leaſt inflection which might give credit to the agitation of her mind, and without giving the leaſt expreſſion to the harmony throughout the whole. I will even defy any perſon whatever, to find by the muſic alone, either from the tune, the melody, the declamation, or the accompaniment, any ſenſible difference between the beginning and the end of the ſcene, by which the reader can poſſibly judge of the prodigious change that is wrought on the heart of Armida.

Obſerve alſo the thorough-baſs: what a number of crotchets! how many little trifling notes, to run after the harmonic ſucceſſion! Is this the movement of the baſs of a good recitative; in which we ſhould hear only the full notes, here and there, as ſeldom as poſſible, and only to prevent the voice of the ſpeaker and the ear of the auditor from wandering?

But let us ſee how the fine verſes of this ſoliloquy are ſet, which may paſs in fact for a maſter-piece in poetry.

Enfin il eſt en ma puiſſance.

Here we have a *trill*, and, what is worſe, an

abſolute reſt on the firſt verſe, whereas the ſenſe is not finiſhed till we come to the ſecond. I confeſs, that the poet had poſſibly done better to have omitted the ſecond verſe, and have left to the ſpectators the pleaſure of reading it in the looks of the actreſs. But ſince he hath employed it, it was the buſineſs of the muſician to ſet it.

Ce fatal ennemi, ce ſuperbe vainqueur!

I ſhould, perhaps, have pardoned the compoſer for having ſet the ſecond verſe in a different manner from the firſt, if he had taken that liberty more frequently on more neceſſary occaſions.

Le charme du ſommeil le livre a ma vengeance.

The words *charme* and *ſommeil*, lay always an inevitable ſnare for the compoſer; he hath here forgotten the fury of Armida, to take a little nap, from which he is to wake at the word *percer*. If you imagine that he hath employed the ſoft ſounds in the firſt hemiſtich by accident, you need only liſten to the baſs to be convinced of the contrary. Lulli was not a man that uſed the dieſis for nothing.

Je vais percer ſon invincible cœur.

The cadence at the end, is ridiculous in ſo impetuous a movement. How cold and graceleſs is that trill? How vilely placed on a ſhort ſyllable, in the middle of a recitative that ſhould have flown with rapidity, in the midſt of ſuch a violent paſſion.

Par lui tous mes captifs ſont ſortis d'eſclavage:
Qu'il eprouve toute ma rage.

We

We ſee here is a very artful reſerve of the poet. Armida, after having declared ſhe would pierce the heart of Renault, perceives in her own the firſt emotions of pity, or rather of love. She ſeeks for reaſons to confirm her in her reſolution: and this intellectual tranſition properly introduces theſe two verſes; which otherwiſe would ill agree with the preceding, and would have been altogether ſuperfluous, as relating what could be no ſecret either to the actreſs or the ſpectators. Let us now ſee how the muſician has expreſſed theſe ſecret emotions of the heart of Armida. He ſaw, indeed, that there muſt neceſſarily be ſome interval between theſe two verſes and the preceeding; and therefore hath made a ſilent reſt, which he hath filled up with no accompaniment, though during the moment in which Armida had ſo much to feel, and which of courſe the orcheſtra ſhould have expreſſed. After this pauſe, he begins exactly in the ſame key, on the ſame accord, and on the very note with which he left off; paſſing ſucceſſively through all the ſounds of the accord during a whole meaſure, and quitting it at length with difficulty, and at a time when it was no longer neceſſary.

Quel trouble me ſaiſit? Qui me fait heſiter?

Another ſilent pauſe, and that is all. This verſe is ſet in the ſame key, and almoſt in the ſame accord, as the preceding; without any alteration which may indicate the prodigious change which hath happened in the diſcourſe and the mind of Armida. The tones, indeed, become ſomething ſtronger by the movement of the baſs: but, good God! is this enough at a time when all

the harmony ſhould be interrupted, and every thing ſhould deſcribe agitation and diſorder. Beſides, a ſlight alteration only in the baſs, altho' it may give an additional energy to the inflections of the voice, it cannot ſupply the total want of them. In repeating theſe verſes, the heart, the eyes, the countenance, the geſture of Armida, every thing is changed except the voice; ſhe ſpeaks often indeed, but always in the ſame note.

Qu'eſt-ce qu'en ſa faveur la pitie me veut dire?
Frappons.

As this verſe may be taken in two different ſenſes, I ſhall not cavil at Lulli for not having preferred that which I chuſe to give them. It is, nevertheleſs, incomparably more ſpirited, and better illuſtrates what follows. Armida, according to Lulli, continues to melt in aſking herſelf,

Qu'eſt-ce qu'en ſa faveur la pitie me veut dire?

Then all of a ſudden ſhe reſumes her former fury, in the ſingle word

Frappons.

Now I conceive, that the enraged Armida, after having heſitated ſome time, rejects with precipitation her falſe compaſſion, and pronounces eagerly, raiſing up her dagger at the ſame time,

Qu'eſt-ce qu'en ſa faveur la pitie me veut dire?
Frappons.

Perhaps, indeed, even the compoſer underſtood the verſes in the ſame ſenſe, notwithſtanding he hath ſet them otherwiſe: for the notes determine ſo little in the affair of declamation, that we may venture to give the words what meaning we like beſt.

——— Ciel!

——Ciel! qui peut m'arreter?
Achevons—Je fremis! Vengeons-nous——
Je ſoupire.

This is undoubtedly the moſt violent ſituation of the whole ſcene. Now it is that there is the greateſt ſtruggle in the breaſt of Armida. Who could believe that the muſician hath let all the agitation paſs in the ſame tone, without the leaſt mental tranſition, without the leaſt harmonical break, and that in a manner ſo inſipid, and with a harmony ſo unmeaning and ill-executed, that, inſtead of ſaying with the poet,

Achevons;—je fremis. Vengeons-nous——
je ſoupire:

the muſician ſays exactly,

Achevons; achevons. Vengeons-nous; vengeons-nous.

The trills have particularly a fine effect on ſuch words; and there is aſſuredly a perfect cadence on the word *ſoupire*.

Eſt-ce ainſi que je dois me venger aujourdhui?
Ma colere s'eteint quand j'approche de lui.

Theſe two verſes would be ſet in a manner very declamatory, had there been a greater interval between them; and if the ſecond did not finiſh with a perfect cadence. Theſe perfect cadences always ruin the expreſſion, particularly in the French recitative, in which they fall ſo heavily.

Plus je le vois, plus ma vengeance eſt vaine.

Every perſon who knows any thing of the true

declamation of theſe verſes, muſt condemn the ſecond hemiſtic as contrary to the ſenſe. The voice ought to riſe upon *ma vengeance*, and fall again gently on *vaine*.

Mon bras tremblant ſe refuſe a ma haine.

A wretched full cadence! and by ſo much the more ſo as it is accompanied by a trill.

Ah! quelle cruaute de lui ravir le jour!

Let Madam Dumeſnil ſpeak that line, and you will find that the word *cruaute* is the moſt elevated, and that the voice lowers itſelf conſtantly to the end of the verſe: but how is it poſſible he ſhould neglect to emphaſize the word *jour?* Here we diſcover the muſician.

I paſs over the reſt of the ſcene as having nothing farther in it intereſting or remarkable, except the general inconſiſtency and repeated quavers through the whole.

Que, s'il ſe peut, je le haiſſe.

This parentheſis, *s'il ſe peut*, appears to me a ſufficient proof of the talents of the muſician; when we find the words *je le haiſſe* ſet to the very ſame notes, and exactly in the ſame manner, it is very difficult not to perceive why Lulli was ſo little capable of ſetting to muſic the poetry of the great genius he kept in his pay.

With reſpect to the paltry air at the end of this ſoliloquy, I had rather ſay nothing about it; and if any of my readers are fond of the French muſic, and know any thing of the Italian piece which was propoſed as a parallel to this, and particularly the impetuous, pathetic, and tragical air which cloſes it, they will, I doubt not, be pleaſed with my ſilence.

To

To recapitulate in a few words my opinion of this celebrated ſoliloquy, I ſay, that if we look upon it in the light of ſinging, it contains neither meaſure, character, nor melody; if we conceive it only as ſimple recitative, it is both unnatural and inexpreſſive; and, whatever name you pleaſe to call it by, it is full of wiredrawn ſounds, trills, and other ornaments ſtill more ridiculous from their ſituation, than they even generally are in French muſic.

Its modulation, indeed, is regular; but it is puerile on account of that regularity, and at the ſame time pedantic, without energy, and without intereſt. The accompaniment is confined to the thorough-baſs, in a ſituation that required a diſplay of all the powers of muſic: and even that baſs is fitter to lay under the leſſon of a ſchool-boy, than to be the accompaniment of a ſpirited ſcene of an opera; the harmony of which ſhould be well choſen, and applied with the moſt exquiſite diſcernment, in order to render the declamation more ſenſible, and the expreſſion more affecting. In a word, if any body ſhould take into their head to play the muſic of that ſcene, without adding the words, without ſqualling and without geſture, it would be impoſſible to deduce any idea from it analogous to the ſituation it ſhould deſcribe, or the ſentiments it is made uſe of to expreſs. On the contrary, the whole would appear to be only a tedious ſucceſſion of ſounds modulated at random, and ſolely with a view to lengthen out the time. And yet, this ſoliloquy always had, and I doubt not always will have, a ſtriking effect on the ſtage; becauſe the verſes are admirable, and the ſituation lively and intereſting.

But

But without the looks and action of the actreſs, I am perſuaded that nobody could bear the recitative, and that ſuch muſic ſtands in great need of the aſſiſtance of the eyes to be ſupportable to the ears.

I conceive I have now fully ſhewn that there is neither meaſure nor melody in the French muſic, becauſe the language is not ſuſceptible of it; that French ſinging is only a continual ſqualling, intolerable to any unprejudiced ear; that its harmony is dull, inexpreſſive, and puerile; that the French airs are no airs, and that their recitative is in fact no recitative. Hence I conclude, that the French nation have no muſic, nor can have any *; or that, if they ever have one, it will be ſo much the worſe for them.

I am, Sir, &c.

* I do not reckon it having a muſic, to borrow that of another language, and to endeavour to adapt it to our own; nay, I had much rather retain our old vile and ridiculous chant, than to mix ſtill more ridiculouſly the Italian melody with the French. This diſguſting union, which will perhaps be the ſtudy of our muſicians for the future, is too monſtrous to be admitted, nor will the character of our language ever bear it. A few comic pieces may probably paſs under favour of the ſymphony; but I will be hold to ſay, that tragedy will never be even attempted. There has been much applauded this ſummer, at the comic opera, the performance of a man of talents, who ſeems to have attended to good muſic with a good ear, and has converted a piece of this kind into French, as near as poſſible: his accompaniments are imitations, without being copies; and if he has not arrived at muſic, it is becauſe it was impoſſible. As to you, young muſicians, who find in yourſelves talents for your art, go on publicly to deſpiſe the Italian muſic; I perceive that your intereſt requires it: but I would adviſe you ſpeedily to ſtudy that language and its muſic, if you would ever be able to turn againſt your competitors that diſdain which you at preſent affect to have for your maſters.

NARCISSUS,

OR

The SELF-ADMIRER.

A COMEDY,

Repreſented at Paris by his Majeſty's Company of Comedians, on the 18th of December 1752.

The PREFACE.

THIS Comedy was written when I was but eighteen years of age, and I have kept it by me as long as I ſet any value on the reputation of an author. At length, however, I have taken courage to publiſh it, though I ſhall never be bold enough to ſay any thing in its defence. It is not, therefore, in behalf of my piece, but myſelf, that I now addreſs the public.

In ſpite of the reluctance I feel in ſpeaking of myſelf, it is neceſſary that I ſhould either acknowledge the faults imputed to me, or that I ſhould juſtify myſelf againſt ſuch imputations. I am ſenſible that I do not engage with equal weapons; my opponents attacking me with raillery, and I defending myſelf only by argument: but provided I can convince my adverſaries, I give myſelf very little trouble about perſuading them.

By endeavouring to merit ſelf-eſteem, I have learned to do without that of others, who, for the moſt part, do as well without mine. But though it be of no conſequence whether people think well or ill of me, it is of very great conſequence that they ſhould have no reaſon to think ill of me. And it is of conſequence to the truth, which I have maintained, that its defender ſhould not be juſtly accuſed of taking its part merely out of caprice or vanity, without either loving or knowing it.

The ſide I took, in the diſcuſſion of a certain philoſophical queſtion, ſome years ago, did not fail to create me a number of enemies *; more

* I am informed that many perſons take it ill that I call my enemies by the name of *enemies*; nor indeed is it at all unlikely

zealous perhaps for the intereſts of men of letters, than for the honour of literature. This I foreſaw, and did not at all doubt that their conduct on the occaſion would prove more in my favour than all my diſſertations. In fact, they had not the prudence to conceal their ſurpriſe or vexation at finding an academy diſplay its integrity ſo unſeaſonably. They ſpared for no in-

likely in an age when nobody dares any longer call any thing by its proper name. I learn alſo, that each of my adverſaries complains when I reply to any other objections than his own; pretending that I throw away my time in combating chimeras. This ſufficiently proves to me, that they do not throw away theirs in reading the objections of each other. As to my own part, I thought myſelf obliged to take that trouble: and have read all the numerous writings publiſhed againſt me, even from the firſt reply I was honoured with, to the four German ſermons lately printed; one of which begins much in the following manner: "If Socrates, my brethren, were to riſe from the dead, and behold the flouriſhing ſtate of the ſciences in Europe;—why do I ſay Europe?—even in Germany;—why do I ſay Germany?—even in Saxony;—why do I ſay Saxony?—even in Leipzig;—why do I ſay Leipſig?—even in this univerſity; Socrates himſelf, I ſay, ſtruck with aſtoniſhment and reſpect, would place himſelf modeſtly among our ſtudents; and, receiving our lectures with ſubmiſſion, would ſoon loſe among us that ignorance of which he ſo juſtly complained." I have read all theſe things, and have made but few replies to them; but I am very glad thoſe gentlemen, their authors, have thought well enough of them to be jealous of the preference. As to thoſe perſons who are offended at the word *enemies*, I conſent with all my heart to give it up, provided they will furniſh me with another by which I may denote not only all thoſe who have attacked my opinions, either in print, or more prudentially, and with greater ſecurity, in company with the women and the wits, among whom they might be aſſured I ſhould not go to defend myſelf; but alſo thoſe who, pretending now to believe that I have no enemies, yet at firſt imagined the objections of thoſe enemies unanſwerable, and when I had replied to them, cenſured me for ſo doing, becauſe, according to them, I had not been attacked. They will permit me therefore, after all, to continue ſtill to call my enemies by their proper name; for, notwithſtanding the great politeneſs of the age I live in, I am as unpoliſhed as the Macedonians of Philip.

invectives, nor even falſehoods *, in their endeavours to invalidate the force of its judgment. Nor was I forgotten in the midſt of their declamations. Many of them undertook boldly to refute me; thoſe who are judges know with what force, and the public in general know with what ſucceſs. Others of them, more cunning, and ſenſible of the danger of controverting directly demonſtrative truths, artfully diverted on my perſon the attention which ſhould have been paid only to my arguments; while an examination of the accuſations they brought againſt me, made the more important accuſations I brought againſt them overlooked. It is to theſe, therefore, I muſt once again make reply.

They pretend that I do not believe a word of the truths I have maintained; and that, though I have demonſtrated certain propoſitions, I am firmly perſuaded to the contrary: that is as much as to ſay, I have proved things ſo very extravagant, that it may be juſtly affirmed I could do it only by way of amuſement. It is in this manner they do honour to that ſcience, which ſerves as a foundation for all the reſt; while the art of reaſoning muſt doubtleſs be ſuppoſed to ſerve greatly to the diſcovery of truth, when it can be employed ſo very ſucceſsfully in the demonſtration of abſurdities!

They pretend that I do not believe a word of the truths I have maintained. This is doubtleſs, on their part, a very new and convenient manner of replying to arguments that are unanſwe-

* In the Mercury of the year 1752, may be ſeen the diſavowal of the academy of Dijon, with reſpect to a certain piece falſely attributed by the author to one of the members of that academy.

rable, to refute even the demonſtrations of Euclid, and every thing elſe that is demonſtrated in the world. It appears to me, that thoſe, who ſo raſhly accuſe me of ſpeaking againſt my own ſentiments, make very little ſcruple of ſpeaking againſt theirs. For they have found nothing, either in my writings or in my conduct, that ſhould ſuggeſt ſuch an idea, as I ſhall preſently prove: and they muſt not pretend to be ignorant, that when a man ſpeaks ſeriouſly, he has a right to be believed, at leaſt if his actions do not contradict his words; nor indeed if they did, would it be always a proof that he did not believe what he ſaid.

They may exclaim, therefore, as much as they pleaſe, that, in declaring myſelf againſt the ſciences, I ſpeak againſt my opinion. I know of but one anſwer to make to an aſſertion ſo raſh and ſo deſtitute at once of proof and probability; this is ſhort and expreſſive, and would have them take my denial for their anſwer.

They pretend farther, that my conduct is inconſiſtent with my principles; and it is not to be doubted they will make uſe of this ſecond plea to corroborate the firſt, for there are numbers of people very capable of diſcovering evidence of what does not exiſt. They will ſay, that while I compoſe muſic and write verſes, it is with a very bad grace I declaim againſt the fine arts; and that even in the province of the belles-lettres, which I affect to deſpiſe, there are many occupations much more laudable than that of writing comedies. It is neceſſary to make a reply alſo to this accuſation.

In the firſt place, though this ſhould be admitted as ſtrictly true; I ſay it can only prove my

my conduct to be bad, but not that I do not ſpeak ſincerely. If it were lawful to deduce proofs of the ſentiments of mankind from their actions, we might with great reaſon conclude, that the love of juſtice is baniſhed from among mankind, and that there does not exiſt a ſingle Chriſtian upon the face of the earth. Let them produce men who act always conformably to their principles, and I will paſs ſentence on mine. Such is the lot of humanity, reaſon points out to us the goal, but our paſſions lead us aſtray. Though it were true, therefore, that I did not act agreeably to my ſentiments, that alone is no reaſon to accuſe me of ſpeaking contrary to my ſentiments, or to charge my principles with being falſe.

But if I ſhould be condemned on this head, it will be ſufficient to compare the different times of my delinquency, to conciliate the matter. I have not had the happineſs to think always as I do at preſent. Deceived by the prejudices and prepoſſeſſions of the age, I long thought ſtudy the only occupation worthy of a wiſe man: I looked upon the ſciences therefore with reſpect, and the learned with admiration *. I did not comprehend how perſons could be miſled who conſtantly followed demonſtration,

* I cannot help ſmiling as often as I reflect on my former ſimplicity. I never read a book of morality or philoſophy, but I thought I was looking into the very ſoul and principles of the author. I conceived all theſe grave writers to be men of irreproachable lives, modeſt, prudent and virtuous. I formed angelical ideas of their converſation, and ſhould not have approached any one of their houſes, but with as much reverence as I ſhould have approached a ſanctuary. At length, I had the opportunity to ſee and converſe with them; this puerile prepoſſeſſion vaniſhed, and it is the only error of which they cured me.

nor that they could do ill in always preaching up wiſdom. It was not till after I took a cloſer view of things, that I learned to ſet a juſt value on them; and though, in my reſearches, I have always found *ſatis eloquentiæ, ſapientiæ parum*, it required much time, obſervation, and reflection, to diſſipate the illuſion of ſcientific pomp, by which I had been captivated. It is not to be wondered at, that, during the prevalence of theſe errors and prejudices, while I held the character of an author in ſuch high eſtimation, I ſhould ſometimes aſpire to obtain it myſelf. At thoſe times were the verſes, with moſt of my other pieces, and among the reſt this little comedy, occaſionally written. It would perhaps be too ſevere to reproach me, at this time of day, with the amuſements of my youth; it would, at leaſt, be injurious to accuſe me on this account of having acted contrary to principles which I did not at that time entertain. It is long ſince I have given up all pretenſions to things of this kind; and think that my giving them to the public, after having prudently kept them by me ſo long, is a frank confeſſion that I diſdain equally the commendation and the cenſure they may excite: for I no longer regard them with the eye of an author. They are a kind of illegitimate children, which one careſſes with pleaſure, though bluſhing at the ſame time to have been the father of them, and ſending them abroad, with a laſt farewel, to take their fortune, without being greatly ſolicitous what may become of them.

But it is throwing away argument, to reaſon upon ſuch chimerical ſuppoſitions. If I am accuſed, without reaſon, of cultivating letters which

I deſpiſe, I defend myſelf from ſuch accuſation without neceſſity: for, though the fact were true, there would be no inconſiſtency in it; as it remains for me to prove.

I ſhall to this end, according to my uſual cuſtom, follow that ſimple and eaſy method which beſt agrees with the truth. I ſhall lay down the ſtate of the queſtion anew; I ſhall explain my principles anew, and upon that expoſition ſhall challenge my adverſaries to ſhew in what my actions give the lie to my words. They, on their part, will take care no doubt to give me an anſwer; as they are ſuch adepts at the wonderful art of diſputing pro and contra upon all kinds of ſubjects. They will begin, according to their cuſtom, by laying down a different queſtion after their own fancy; and this they will make me reſolve in the manner moſt convenient to themſelves. In order to attack me with the greater advantage, they will make me argue not after my own manner, but after theirs; they will artfully divert the eyes of the reader from the eſſential object, to fix them on others which are inſignificant. They will combat a phantom of their own imagination, and pretend they have vanquiſhed me. But I ſhall do what I ought. To begin.

"Science is good for nothing, and is productive of nothing but evil; for it is bad in its own nature. It is no more inſeparable from vice, than ignorance from virtue. Every learned people in the world have been corrupt; every ignorant people virtuous: in a word, there are no vices but what are among the learned, nor is there any ſuch thing as a virtuous man but among thoſe who know nothing. There is one

method therefore for us to become honeſt people; this is, to proſcribe the ſciences and the learned, to burn our libraries, ſhut up our academies, colleges, and univerſities, and to plunge ourſelves again into the barbariſm of the primitive ages."

Such are the curious aſſertions which my adverſaries have refuted: but then, I have never ſaid or thought a ſingle ſyllable of them; nor can any thing well be imagined more oppoſite to my ſyſtem than theſe abſurd propoſitions, which they have the goodneſs to impute to me. What I have really ſaid, and think, and which they have not refuted, is as follows.

The point in queſtion was to determine whether the revival of the arts and ſciences hath contributed to the purity of our morals. In demonſtrating, as I have done, that our morals are not pure *, this queſtion was in a great degree reſolved.

It

* When I ſaid that our manners were corrupt, I did not mean, in ſo ſaying, that thoſe of our anceſtors were pure; but only that ours were ſtill much worſe than theirs. There are a thouſand ſources of corruption among men; and although the ſciences are the moſt rapid and copious, they are far from being the only one. The deſtruction of the Roman empire, the inroads of a multitude of Barbarians, cauſed a ſtrange mixture of a various people, which neceſſarily contributed to diverſify the manners and cuſtoms of each. The cruſades, commerce, the diſcovery of the Indies, navigation, long voyages, and many other cauſes which I do not mention, increaſed the diſorder. Every thing that ſerves to facilitate the communication between different nations, tends reciprocally to convey to each, not the virtues, but the vices of the reſt; and ſerves to degenerate thoſe manners which are peculiar and proper to their reſpective climates, conſtitution, and government. The ſciences, therefore, have not done all the miſchief; they have only done a great part; and what is peculiarly theirs, is their having given to vice an agreeable colouring, a certain air of decency which prevents our being ſhocked at it. I remember,

It evidently included, however, another more general and important one, concerning the influence which the cultivation of the ſciences ought ever to have on the morals of a people. It is this, of which the former is only a conſequence, that I propoſed more carefully to examine.

I began with facts, by which I demonſtrated, that the morals of every people in the world have degenerated in proportion as they acquired a taſte for ſtudy, and cultivated literature and the ſciences.

Nor was this enough; for, without being able to deny that theſe things always accompanied each other, it might have been denied that one was neceſſarily induced by the other. I ſhewed, therefore, that the ſource of our errors in this particular, conſiſts in our comparing our own vain and deceitful knowledge with that ſovereign intelligence, which ſees the truth of all things at one view. Science, conſidered abſtractedly, deſerves our admiration; but the fooliſh ſcience of mankind merits only deriſion and contempt.

A taſte for letters in a people always denotes the beginning of corruption, which is haſtily accelerated. For ſuch a taſte cannot prevail over a whole nation, but from two bad cauſes, which ſtudy

ber, when the comedy called the *Villain* * was firſt repreſented, the character of the hero was not thought conſiſtent with its title. Cleon appeared to be only ſuch as people in general are; he was like the reſt of the world: ſo that the abominable character, which is ſo finely drawn and expoſed in that play, and ought to make every one ſhudder at their own guilt that in the leaſt reſembled it, ſeemed quite imperfect; his crimes paſſing for mere acts of gallantry, becauſe thoſe who thought themſelves very honeſt people found him exactly like themſelves.

* Le Mechant.

ſtudy ſupports, and in turn increaſes, viz. idleneſs, and a deſire of diſtinction. In every well-conſtituted ſtate, each citizen hath his particular duties to diſcharge; and theſe are too dear and important to leave him much leiſure for frivolous ſpeculations. In every well-conſtituted ſtate, the citizens are all ſo far equal, that none are preferred to others for their abilities, but only for their virtue: and yet even this laſt diſtinction is often dangerous, as it tends to make men knaves and hypocrites.

The taſte for letters, which ariſes from a deſire of diſtinction, is neceſſarily productive of evils infinitely more dangerous than all their good conſequences are uſeful; making thoſe who indulge themſelves in its cultivation, little ſcrupulous about the means of obtaining their end. The ancient philoſophers obtained great reputation, by teaching mankind their practicable duties, and the principles of virtue. But theſe precepts preſently becoming common, it was neceſſary to obtain diſtinction by taking contrary methods. This gave riſe to the abſurd ſyſtems of Leucippus, Diogenes, Pyrrho, Protagoras, and Lucretius. Among the moderns, Hobbes, Mandeville, and a thouſand others, have affected to diſtinguiſh themſelves in the ſame manner; and their pernicious doctrine hath ſo far prevailed, that although we have ſome true philoſophers zealous to enforce the laws of humanity and virtue, it is ſhocking to ſee how far this *rational* age hath carried its maxims of contempt for the duties of the man and the citizen.

A taſte for letters, philoſophy, and the fine arts, hath extinguiſhed a regard for our principal

pal duties and our ſenſe of true glory. When talents have once laid claim to the honours due to virtue, every body becomes deſirous of being thought a man of parts, and nobody takes a pleaſure in being a man of probity. Hence ariſes another inconſiſtency, which is, that men are rewarded for qualities which do not depend on themſelves; for our talents are borne with us, but our virtues depend on ourſelves.

The firſt and almoſt the only care that is taken in our education, is to ſow the ſeeds of theſe ridiculous prepoſſeſſions. Our unhappy youth are tormented, in order to make them learn their letters. We learn all the rules of grammar, before we hear a word of the duties of man: we are told all that hath hitherto been done in the world, before we are told a word of what we ought to do: and provided we can but prattle agreeably, nobody troubles himſelf whether we know how either to think or act. In a word, we are required to be learned only in things that are of no manner of uſe; and our children are educated exactly like the athletics of the ancients; who, being bred to diſplay their ſtrength and agility in the public ſhews, an uſeleſs and ſuperfluous exerciſe, were careful to avoid employing them to any profitable or commendable uſe.

A taſte for letters, for philoſophy and the fine arts, enervates both body and ſoul. A confinement to the cloſet makes men delicate, and weakens their conſtitution; and the ſoul preſerves with difficulty its vigour when that of the body is loſt. Study wears out the human machine, waſtes the ſpirits, deſtroys its force, and enervates its courage; which ſufficiently ſhews

nature

nature never intended it for us: it is by theſe means we become cowardly and puſillanimous, equally incapable of ſupporting pain or reſiſting our paſſions. It is well known that the inhabitants of cities are little adapted to ſupport the fatigues of war, and we are not leſs ignorant of the character of men of letters with regard to perſonal bravery *. Now nothing is more ſuſpicious than the probity of a coward.

Much reflection on the weakneſs of human nature, often ſerves no other purpoſe than to divert us from great and generous undertakings. In conſequence of meditating on the miſeries of humanity, our apprehenſion cauſes us to ſink under their weight; while too much foreſight deprives us of our fortitude in depriving us of ſecurity. It is in vain we affect to arm ourſelves againſt unforſeen accidents; for, though ſcience endeavours to furniſh us with new ſecurities againſt natural inconveniences, it impreſſes on our minds a greater ſenſe of their weight and importance, than it affords relief by its vain reaſonings and argumentative ſubtilties.

A taſte for philoſophy relaxes all thoſe ties of mutual benevolence and eſteem, which attach men to ſociety: and this is perhaps the moſt pernicious of all the evils it generates. The pleaſures of ſtudy ſoon render every other attachment inſipid. By dint of reflecting on a ſtate

* I ſhall here cite a modern example, for the ſake of thoſe who reproach me with bringing all my examples from the ancients. The republic of Genoa, in order to reduce the Corſicans to ſubjection, thought no method more certain than that of eſtabliſhing among them an academy. It would not be difficult for me to ſwell this note; but it would be putting an affront on the judgment of the learned, whom only I trouble myſelf about.

ſtate of humanity, and obſerving mankind, the philoſopher learns to form a juſt eſtimate of their value; and it is not eaſy to have an affection for what we deſpiſe. He ſoon learns to concentrate in his own perſon all that intereſt which virtuous minds divide among one another. His contempt for others turns to the account of his pride, and his ſelf-love increaſes in proportion to his indifference for the reſt of the world. His family, his country, ſoon become words without meaning; and he is no longer a father, a citizen, or a man; he is merely a philoſopher.

At the ſame time that the cultivation of the ſciences detaches the heart of the philoſopher in a great degree from the reſt of mankind, it attaches men of letters to them in the ſame degree, with a different view, but equally to the prejudice of virtue. Every man, who employs himſelf in the cultivation of agreeable talents, is deſirous of pleaſing and being admired, and to be ſo in preference to all others. The public applauſe belongs to himſelf alone; and he will exert himſelf to the utmoſt to obtain it, unleſs indeed he may exert himſelf ſtill more to prevent the ſucceſs of his contemporaries.

Hence ariſes, on one ſide, the refinements of taſte and politeneſs, baſe ſervility, mean flattery, and all thoſe inſidious ſolicitudes and puerilities which in the end debaſe the ſoul and corrupt the heart; and, on the other ſide, the jealouſy and rivalſhip which ſubſiſt between artiſts; together with perfidy, calumny, knavery, treachery, and all the meanneſs and odium of vice. If the philoſopher deſpiſes the world, the artiſt ſoon makes the world deſpiſe him, while both

in

in the end concur to render themſelves contemptible.

To this may be added, that of all the truths I have propoſed to the conſideration of the ſenſible part of mankind, this is the moſt cruel and aſtoniſhing. Our writers all look upon it as a maſter-piece of modern policy, that the ſciences, arts, luxury, commerce, laws, and our other connections, by drawing cloſer together the bonds of ſociety * by perſonal intereſt, lay all under a mutual dependence, and by reciprocal wants unite them in one common intereſt; by which means individuals are obliged to concur to the public good, in order to promote their own. This notion is, doubtleſs, a very fine one, and is ſet forth in its beſt light: but if we examine it with attention and impartiality, we muſt deduct from it a number of its apparent advantages.

It is, to be ſure, a very wonderful thing to have laid mankind under the impoſſibility of living together, without being under the neceſſity of ſupplanting, deceiving, betraying, and deſtroying each other! It is neceſſary for us never to appear what we are; as, for every two men whoſe intereſts may coincide, there are an hundred thouſand, perhaps, whoſe intereſts are totally oppoſite; nor are there any means for any one to ſucceed without deceiving or ruining the

* What I complain of, is, that philoſophy relaxes thoſe bonds of ſociety which are formed by mutual eſteem and benevolence; and that at the ſame time the arts and ſciences, and all other objects of commerce, ſtraiten thoſe bonds by perſonal intereſt. It is, in fact, impoſſible to ſtraiten the one without proportionably relaxing the other; ſo that there is no inconſiſtency in what is above aſſerted.

the reſt. Such is the fatal ſource of outrages, robberies, villanies, and the horrors of all ſorts which are inſeparable from a ſtate in which every one, pretending to promote the reputation and fortune of others, endeavours in reality only to promote his own, and that at their expence.

What have we gained by all this? A great many babblers, rich people, and rationaliſts; that is to ſay, enemies to virtue and to common ſenſe. On the other hand, we have loſt our innocence and our morals. The populace are involved in miſery, and all are the ſlaves of vice. Crimes not actually committed are rooted in our hearts, and nothing is wanting but an aſſurance of impunity for us to put them into execution.

Srange and fatal muſt be that conſtitution in which the accumulation of riches always facilitates the means of farther accumulation, and in which it is impoſſible for him that has nothing to acquire any thing; in which an honeſt man hath no means to extricate himſelf from poverty; in which knaves are moſt honoured, and in which a man muſt neceſſarily renounce all virtue to become a reſpectable perſon. I am ſenſible, that mere declaimers have ſaid all this an hundred times over: but they ſaid it by way of declamation only; I give my reaſons for it: they perceived the evil, and I diſcovered the cauſes; adding, beſide, a very uſeful and conſolatory reflection, in ſhewing that all theſe vices belong not ſo much to man in himſelf, as to man in a ſtate of ſociety ill-governed *. Such

* It is remarkable that a number of petty maxims at preſent prevail in the world, which ſeduce weak people under a falſe

are the truths which I have laid down, and which I have endeavoured to prove in the ſeveral tracts I have publiſhed on the ſubject. I proceed now

falſe notion of philoſophy, and which are beſides very convenient to terminate diſputes in an important and deciſive tone, without our having occaſion to enter into a diſcuſſion of the queſtion. Such is the following: "Mankind have every where the ſame paſſions, they are every where influenced by ſelf-love and intereſt; therefore, they are every where the ſame."

When mathematicians have laid down a ſuppoſition, which leads them regularly, ſtep by ſtep, to an abſurdity; they return by the ſame ſteps back again, and thus demonſtrate the ſuppoſition falſe. The ſame method applied to the maxim in queſtion, would eaſily prove its abſurdity: but we ſhall proceed in another manner. A ſavage is a man, and an European is a man. The ſuperficial reaſoner concludes hence, immediately, that the one is no better than the other; but the true philoſoher reflects, that in Europe, the government, laws, cuſtoms, ſelf-intereſt, all lay individuals under the conſtant neceſſity of reciprocally deceiving each other: every thing contributes to make vice a duty; it is neceſſary they ſhould be wicked, in order to be wiſe: for there cannot be a greater folly than to promote the happineſs of bad men at the expence of one's own. Among the ſavages, ſelf-intereſt pleads as ſtrongly as among us, but it does not inculcate the ſame maxims. The love of ſociety, and their ſolicitude for their common defence, are the only ties by which they are united. The word *property*, which makes even reputable people with us guilty of ſo many crimes, is a term of hardly any meaning with them: they lie under no manner of temptation to impoſe on each other; the public eſteem being the only thing to which every one aſpires, and which they all deſerve. It is very poſſible for a ſavage to commit a bad action; but it is impoſſible he ſhould acquire a habit of doing ill, becauſe it could ſerve no good purpoſe to him. I conceive, a very juſt eſtimation of the morals of men may be formed from the multiplicity of buſineſs ſubſiſting among them: the more trade they carry on, the more induſtry and ingenuity are admired, the more do they deceive and decently impoſe on each other, while they become themſelves more the objects of contempt. It is with reluctance I ſay it; but the man of probity is he only who hath no need to impoſe on any one, and ſuch only is the ſavage.

Illum non populi faſces, non purpura regum,
Flexit et infidos agitans diſcordia fratres;
Non res Romanæ, perituraque regna. Neque ille
Aut doluit miſerans inopem, aut invidit habenti.

now to the concluſions which I have deduced from them.

Science is not made for mankind in general. Human nature is inceſſantly erring in its reſearches; and if at any time it attains their end, it is almoſt always to its prejudice. Man is born to act and reſolve, not to reflect and ſtudy. Reflection ſerves only to make him unhappy, without making him better or wiſer: it cauſes him to regret the good that is paſt, and prevents his enjoyment of the preſent: it preſents to him an happy futurity to ſeduce his imagination and torment his deſires, and a melancholy one to anticipate his diſtreſs. Study corrupts our morals, ruins our health, deſtroys our conſtitution, and often perverts the underſtanding; and tho' indeed it teaches us ſomething, the little knowledge thus acquired is very dearly obtained.

I confeſs, that there are ſome few ſublime geniuſes, who can penetrate through thoſe clouds which invelop the truth; that there are ſome privileged minds capable of reſiſting the abſurdity of vanity, the meanneſs of jealouſy, and thoſe other paſſions which are excited by a taſte for literature. The ſmall number of perſons who have the happineſs to poſſeſs theſe qualities are an honour to mankind; to theſe alone it belongs, for the good of the reſt, to apply themſelves to ſtudy; and this exception confirms the general rule: for, if every individual of mankind were a Socrates, the ſciences would not be hurtful; but then there would be no occaſion for them.

All people who have morals, and of courſe pay a reſpect to the laws, and are averſe to innovations, ought carefully to guard againſt the

ſciences, and particularly the profeſſors of them, whoſe ſententious and dogmatical maxims will ſoon teach them to deſpiſe their laws and cuſtoms; which no nation can ever do without ſinking into corruption. The leaſt change in a nation's cuſtoms, though in ſome reſpects advantageous, turns out always to the prejudice of their morals: for on theſe their morals depends; and when they ceaſe to pay a proper reſpect to theſe, they have no other rule of conduct but their own paſſions, and no other reſtraint than the laws, which may ſometimes keep the vicious within bounds, but will never make them virtuous. Beſides, when philoſophy hath once taught a people to deſpiſe their ancient cuſtoms, they will ſoon learn to elude the laws. I ſay, therefore, it is with the morals of a people, as with the reputation of an individual: it is a treaſure which muſt be carefully preſerved; for if it be once loſt, it is never to be recovered *.

But when a people are corrupted to a certain de-

* I find in hiſtory one example, and that a ſtriking one, which ſeems to contradict this maxim. This is the circumſtance of Rome being founded by a company of banditti, whoſe deſcendants became, in a few generations, the moſt virtuous people that ever exiſted. It would not be difficult, however, to explain the fact, if this were the proper place; but I content myſelf with remarking here, that the founders of Rome were not ſo much men whoſe morals were corrupted, as men whoſe morals were not formed. They did not deſpiſe virtue, but they did not know what virtue was: for the words *virtues* and *vices* are complicated notions, which ariſe only from the frequent commerce of mankind. At the worſt, this objection cannot be brought in favour of the ſciences; for of the two firſt kings of Rome, who formed the republic, and inſtituted its manners and cuſtoms, the one employed himſelf only in war, and the other in religious ceremonies; the two things in all the world moſt foreign to philoſophy.

degree, whether the ſciences have contributed to their corruption or not, ought thoſe ſciences to be baniſhed or cultivated, in order to render the people better, or prevent their growing worſe? This is another queſtion; in the diſcuſſion of which, I have declared abſolutely in the negative. For in the firſt place, as a vicious people never return to virtue, the point is, not to make thoſe virtuous who are not ſuch, but to preſerve them from becoming otherwiſe who are ſo happy as to be ſuch. In the ſecond place, the ſame cauſes which have corrupted a people, ſometimes ſerve to prevent their farther corruption. Even as a man, who hath hurt his conſtitution by medicines, is obliged to have farther recourſe to medicines in order to ſave his life: ſo when the arts and ſciences have given riſe to vices, they become neceſſary to prevent their degenerating into flagitious crimes. They deſtroy virtue in fact, but leave the external appearance * of it; which is ſtill pleaſing. They introduce, in its place, decorum and politeneſs; and inſtead of the fear of appearing vicious, they ſubſtitute the fear of appearing ridiculous.

My advice therefore is, and I have given it more than once, that we ſhould carefully maintain our preſent academies, colleges, univerſities, libraries, theatres, and all thoſe other a-

* This appearance is a certain candour of manners, which is often ſubſtituted in the place of their purity; a certain appearance of order, which prevents the moſt horrible confuſion; a certain admiration of *fine* things, which prevents the *good* from ſinking totally into oblivion. It is vice which aſſumes the maſk of virtue, not as hypocriſy, to deceive and betray; but to prevent, under that amiable and ſacred appearance, that horrour which it conceives at itſelf when it beholds itſelf in its true image.

muſements, which may create a diverſion to the vicious diſpoſitions of mankind, and prevent their employing their leiſure hours in more pernicious exerciſes. For in a country where there ſhould be neither probity nor morality left, it would be ſtill better to live among knaves than among ruffians.

I come now to aſk, where is the inconſiſtency of my cultivating a taſte for thoſe arts and ſciences, the progreſs of which I approve? It were now a fruitleſs taſk to perſuade people to do good; all that can be done is, to prevent their doing ill. To this end, they muſt be engaged in puerilities to divert them from bad actions; they muſt be amuſed inſtead of documented. If my writings have ediſied the very few good people in the world, I have done them all the ſervice in my power; and perhaps it may alſo be of ſome ſervice to them, for me to throw out objects of amuſement to others, which may prevent their receiving any diſturbance from them. I ſhould think myſelf happy if I had a dramatic piece to be daily hiſſed off the ſtage; if by ſuch means I might reſtrain but for two hours the vicious deſigns of a ſingle ſpectator; if I might preſerve the honour of the daughter or wife of a friend, the ſecret of his confident, or the fortune of his creditor. When morality hath no longer any influence, nothing ſhould then be thought of but the police; and it is well known that muſic and the theatres form one of its moſt important objects.

If, after this, there remains any difficulty with regard to my juſtification, I will venture boldly to ſay, it reſpects neither my adverſaries nor the public, but myſelf alone. For it is only from

ſelf-

ſelf-obſervation that I muſt be enabled to judge whether I am to reckon myſelf among the ſmall number of the ſelect, and whether my mind is capable of ſuſtaining the weight of literary ſtudies. I have more than once perceived the danger, and more than once have I abandoned them with a deſign never to reſume them more; thus renouncing their ſeductive charms, I ſacrificed to my peace of heart the only pleaſures capable of engaging it. And now, if amidſt the languors of a feeble conſtitution, if at the cloſe of a tedious and painful life, I have ventured to ſoothe my pains by employing a few moments in the ſame purſuits, I conceive that I have neither ſhewed myſelf ſo much intereſted, or ſo vain of my performances, as to merit in this reſpect thoſe reproaches which I have caſt on men of letters.

There wanted but one proof to complete the knowledge I wanted of myſelf; and this I made without heſitation. After having examined into the ſituation of my mind with reſpect to literary ſucceſs, it remained for me to examine its ſtate in caſe of the reverſe. I now know what to think of it there too, and ſet the public at defiance. My piece had the fortune it deſerved, and I foreſaw; but excepting the uneaſineſs I felt at the repreſentation's having tired me, I went out of the theatre much better and more juſtly ſatisfied with myſelf, than I ſhould have done had it ſucceeded.

I adviſe thoſe, therefore, who are ſo ready to reproach me, to take the trouble to know my principles better, and alſo to obſerve my conduct more nearly, before they tax me with contradiction and inconſiſtency. If they ever perceive

ceive me uſing little arts to obtain the ſuffrage and applauſe of the public; if they find me vain of having compoſed pretty ſongs, aſhamed of having written bad comedies, or that I endeavour to detract from the reputation of my contemporaries, or that I affect to depreciate the great men of the age in order to raiſe myſelf to their level; or if they find me aſpiring to academical honours, paying my court to women of faſhion, ſervilely offering incenſe to the great; or that, unwilling to ſupport myſelf by the labour of my own hands, I am aſhamed of the profeſſion I have choſen, and am in the way of making a fortune; if they ever find, in a word, that the love of reputation makes me forget that of virtue, I beg of them to advertiſe me of it, and that publicly; when I promiſe them I will immediately throw my books and manuſcripts into the fire, and confeſs myſelf guilty of all the errors they are pleaſed to reproach me for.

In the mean time, I ſhall continue to write books, to make verſes, and to compoſe muſic, if I have abilities, time, and inclination. I ſhall continue very frankly to ſpeak the bad opinion I have of letters, and of thoſe who cultivate them *; and ſhall think myſelf not the worſe for

* I admire how the greateſt part of the literati are miſtaken in this affair. When they ſaw the arts and ſciences attacked, they thought they were themſelves perſonally intereſted; altho', without any inconſiſtency, they might all have been of my opinion, that, although theſe things have been very prejudicial to ſociety, it is at preſent become eſſentially neceſſary to make uſe of them, as a remedy for the evil they have cauſed; even as we do ſome poiſonous animals, by bruiſing them to pieces, and applying them to the wound they have made. In a word, there is not one man of letters in the world, who, if he could but ſupport

for it. It is true, it may hereafter be ſaid, that this declared enemy of the arts and ſciences wrote nevertheleſs, and publiſhed, theatrical performances; and this, I confeſs, will be a bitter ſatire, not on me, but on the age in which I live.

ſupport the preceding article in his own conduct, might not ſay in his own favour what I ſay in mine: and this manner of arguing appears to me very proper for men of letters in general; for, by the way, they care very little about the progreſs of the ſciences, provided the profeſſors of them are held in veneration; reſembling, in this particular, the prieſts of paganiſm, who inculcated their religion only to maintain their own importance.

PER-

PERSONS of the DRAMA.

MEN.

LISIMON, father to Valentine and Lucinda, and guardian to Leander and Angelica.

VALENTINE, the Self-Admirer.

LEANDER, brother to Angelica.

FRONTIN, servant to Valentine.

WOMEN.

ANGELICA.

LUCINDA.

MARTHA, Lucinda's woman.

Scene, *The apartments of Valentine.*

The SELF-ADMIRER.

SCENE I.

LUCINDA and MARTHA.

Luc. I JUST now ſaw my brother walking in the garden: let us make haſte and lay his picture on his toilet before he returns.

Mar. There it is, madam, with the drapery ſo altered, that it cannot fail to make him ridiculous. Well, though he be one of the handſomeſt men in the world, he looks ſtill prettier in the dreſs of a woman.

Luc. My brother Valentine is indeed ſo delicate and affectedly nice in his dreſs, that he is a kind of woman in man's clothes; ſo that his portrait thus metamorphoſed, ſeems rather his natural garb than a diſguiſe.

Mar. Nay, where is the harm? If the women are now-a-days fond of coming as near as poſſible to the men, is it not proper the men ſhould meet them half-way, and that one ſhould affect the airs of coquetry while the other affect airs of conſequence? Thanks to the faſhion, the ſexes will thus ſoon be brought upon a level.

Luc. Well, I cannot bring myſelf to approve ſuch ridiculous faſhions. Perhaps our own ſex may be ſo happy as not to be leſs agreeable, tho' leſs reſpectable. But for the men, I lament their blindneſs and infatuation. What can the fooliſh young fellows mean by uſurping our privileges? Do they think to render themſelves more agreeable to the women by endeavouring to reſemble them?

Mar.

Mar. If they do, they are miſtaken; for the women hate one another too cordially, to like any thing that reſembles them. But as to this picture, madam; are not you afraid the Chevalier will be offended at the trick you are going to put on him?

Luc. Not at all, Martha: my brother is naturally good-natured; and, ſetting aſide his particular foible, does not want ſenſe. He will readily ſee, by the ſilent reproach of his picture, that I only deſigned to cure him of a piece of folly, which is even diſagreeable to his miſtreſs Angelica, my father's ward, to whom he is juſt going to be married. It will be doing her at leaſt a piece of ſervice, to correct the faults of her lover; and you know how greatly I ſtand in need of the aſſiſtance of this kind friend, to break off the match my father intends for me with her brother.

Mar. That young ſtranger then, I find, that Cleontes, whom you ſaw laſt ſummer at Paſſy, ſtill ſticks at your heart.

Luc. I do not deny it. I even fully depend upon his promiſe of ſeeing me again ſoon, and on that which Angelica hath made me to engage her brother to renounce me.

Mar. Renounce you, madam! No, no. Believe me, your charms will have a greater influence to confirm that engagement, than Angelica will have to break it.

Luc. You are a flatterer, Martha; but I tell you, as Leander hath never ſeen me, it will be eaſy for his ſiſter to prepoſſeſs him againſt me, and to perſuade him, that, as he cannot be happy with a woman whoſe heart is engaged to another perſon, he cannot do better than to diſengage himſelf by a decent refuſal.

Mar.

Mar. A decent refuſal? Can you think, madam, Leander can have the *decency* to refuſe ſuch a fine young lady as you are, with a fortune of forty thouſand crowns?—(*Aſide*) If ſhe knew that Leander and Cleontes were the ſame perſon, ſhe would not think ſuch a refuſal very *decent*.

Luc. Hark, Martha! What noiſe is that? Quick, quick, hide the picture. It is certainly my brother coming; and we have loſt an opportunity, by ſtanding to prattle here, of putting our project in execution.

Mar. No, madam, it is miſtreſs Angelica.

SCENE II.

ANGELICA LUCINDA, MARTHA.

Ang. You know, my dear Lucinda, with what reluctance I gave into your project, when you cauſed the drapery of your brother's picture to be altered: and now I ſee you on the point of putting it into execution, I tremble to think how much he may be diſpleaſed with us, when he finds himſelf made a jeſt of. I beg of you, therefore, to give up this fooliſh deſign. I perceive I am not formed for diverting myſelf at the riſk of my repoſe.

Luc. What a timid creature! Valentine is too fond to take any thing amiſs from you, ſo long as you are only his miſtreſs. Remember you have but one day left to indulge yourſelf in following your own inclinations. His turn will come ſoon enough. Beſides, the intent is to cure him of a foible which expoſes him to ridicule; and this is properly the taſk of a miſtreſs. We may correct the faults of a lover;

but, alas! we muſt bear with thoſe of a huſband.

Ang. But in what, after all, do you find him ſo very ridiculous? As he is really amiable, is he ſo very wrong to think ſo? Do not we ſet him the example? He is deſirous of pleaſing; but if this be a foible, by what virtue more agreeable can a man recommend himſelf to ſociety?

Mar. Particularly the ſociety of the ladies. (*Aſide.*)

Ang. In ſhort, Lucinda, if you will be ruled by me, we will conceal both the portrait, and this air of raillery; which may as well be taken for an inſult, as for a correction.

Luc. Oh! No. I will not throw away thus the fruits of my induſtry. However, I will myſelf run the riſk of its ſucceſs; you may be no accomplice in the affair, any farther than to ſtand by and look on.

Mar. A mighty pretty diſtinction truly! (*Aſide.*)

Luc. I ſhall be delighted to obſerve the looks of Valentine. It will be a charming ſcene to behold how he takes the deceit.

Mar. True, madam. The pretence, I ſee, is the correction of Valentine; but the real motive is to laugh at his expence. This is the happy turn of the women. They often correct the ridiculous, in thinking only to amuſe themſelves.

Ang. Well, well, if you are reſolved on it, do: but remember, you ſhall be anſwerable to me for the event.

Luc. Be it ſo.

Ang. Mind, you have played me, ſince we have been

been together, a hundred unlucky tricks that I owe you payment for. If this affair ſhould involve me in any ſcrape with Valentine, take care of yourſelf.

Luc. Yes, yes.

Ang. Think a little of your Leander.

Luc. Ah! my dear Angelica——

Ang. Nay, nay, if you make me quarrel with your brother, I proteſt you ſhall marry mine.—(*In a lower tone Martha*) Martha, you have promiſed to keep the ſecret.

Mar. You may depend on me.

Luc. Well then, I———

Mar. I hear the Chevalier's voice. Away, away, unleſs you intend he ſhould have a circle of women at his toilette.

Luc. Let us take care he do not ſee us. (*She lays down the picture on the table.*) There, now, the trap is baited.

Mar. Now will I watch my gentleman, to ſee how——

Luc. Huſh! Let us be going.

Ang. Well, I have an ominous notion of the ſucceſs of this buſineſs.

SCENE III.

VALENTINE, FRONTIN.

Val. Well, my *Frigidia*, to day will be a great day for you.

Fron. Frigidia! That is as much as to ſay, *Angelica.* Yes, yes, a wedding-day is a great day indeed, that deviliſhly lengthens all thoſe that come after it.

Val. What pleaſure it will give me to make Angelica happy!

Fron. Why, ſir, do you intend ſoon to leave her a widow?

Val. Away with your unſeaſonable witticiſms ——You know how much I love her. Tell me now, what do you think can be wanting to her happineſs? With ſo much love, with ſome underſtanding, and ſuch a figure as you ſee; I think I am always certain to pleaſe.

Fron. Oh, ſir! the think is indubitable; you have made the experiment firſt on yourſelf.

Val. What I moſt regret in this affair is, that my marriage will make a number of others die with chagrin; they will be at ſuch a loſs to know where to beſtow their hearts elſewhere.

Fron. Oh! moſt certainly. Thoſe who love you, for example, will ſincerely hate your dear half. And the others——but where the devil ſhall we find any of them?

Val. But it grows late. It is time to dreſs to go to Angelica. Come on. *(He ſits down to his toilette.)* What do you think of my looks to-day? I am very pale, I don't ſeem to look ſo well as ordinary.

Fron. As ordinary! No. You are only as you are in ordinary.

Val. This is a very vile cuſtom, this uſe of *rouge*: and yet I cannot do without it; I ſhould be undone by the want of it. Where is my patch-box? Ha! what's this? a picture!—— Ah Frontin, what a charming object!—— Where did you get this portrait?

Fron. I! ſir—May I be hanged if I know any thing of the matter.

Val. What! was it not you who put this picture upon my toilette?

Fron. No, ſir—let me die if I did.

Val.

Val. Who could it be then?

Fron. Faith, I can't tell; it could be only the devil or yourſelf.

Val. Or ſomebody elſe. You are paid for your ſecreſy, I ſee.——Do you know that the ſight of this object is depreciating to Angelica?—Upon my honour it is the prettieſt figure I ever ſaw in my life. What eyes are here! Frontin, I think they reſemble mine.

Fron. That is ſaying every thing.

Val. And a good deal of my air too! Faith, ſhe's a charming creature; if her mind be anſwerable to her perſon. But her taſte is a proof of her underſtanding. The little rogue is a judge of merit.

Fron. What the devil is all this? Let me have the honour, ſir, to look upon this marvellous beauty.

Val. There, look. But don't think me the dupe of your affected ſimplicity. I am no novice in adventures.

Fron. Am I not miſtaken? No. 'Tis even he; it is himſelf. How is he dreſſed up here with flowers and pompoons? This is, doubtleſs, ſome trick of Madam Lucinda's; in which Martha hath at leaſt her ſhare. But I ſhan't interfere with them, my indiſcretion hath already coſt me many a time too dear.

Val. Well, doth Mr Frontin know the original of that picture?

Fron. Poh! know her! Some hundred kicks on the breech, and as many repetitions of a box on the ear, which I have had the honour of receiving from her, have ſufficiently confirmed my remembrance of her.

Val. A young lady give kicks on the breech!

That is a little frolickſome, truly.

Fron. Oh ſir! only the effects of a little domeſtic impatience, which with her paſs for nothing.

Val. How! have you been in her ſervice?

Fron. Yes, ſir, and have even now the honour to be her very humble ſervant.

Val. This is pleaſant enough, that there ſhould be a pretty woman in Paris, and I not know her.——Come, tell me ſincerely, is the original as handſome as the portrait?

Fron. As handſome, ſir! why, to be ſure, if any body hath any thing like your perfections, I know nobody capable of bearing a compariſon with you but her.

Val. (*looking earneſtly on the portrait*) My heart can no longer reſiſt ſuch attractions.—— Frontin, tell me the name of this beauty.

Fron. (*aſide.*) Ah! faith, now I am caught.

Val. What is her name, I ſay?——Speak.

Fron. Her name, ſir!——Her name—— She has no name, ſir:—She is one of tho ſeanonymous beauties, with which the town ſwarms.

Val. Into what ſuſpicions and perplexity this raſcal throws me! Is it poſſible theſe charming features can be thoſe of a wench nobody knows?

Fron. Why not, ſir! Beauty often takes a pleaſure in ornamenting the faces of thoſe who have nothing elſe to boaſt.

Val. And ſo this is———

Fron. A little coquet, very fantaſtical, and very vain, without having any reaſon to be ſo: in a word, a true female petit-maitre.

Val. Thus it is that theſe raſcally valets ſpeak of their maſters and miſtreſſes. I am reſolved, however, to ſee her. Where is her houſe?

Fron.

Fron. Her houſe, ſir! do you think ſuch a little creature as that ever had a houſe?

Val. Don't provoke me, raſcal. Tell me where ſhe lodges then.

Fron. Faith, ſir, without telling you a word of a lie, you know as much of her as I do.

Val. How!

Fron. I'll be ſworn I know the original of that picture no better than you.

Vrl. And it was not you that put it here?

Fron. Devil take me if it was.

Val. How then could you give me ſuch ideas of her?

Fron. You furniſhed me with them yourſelf. Can any thing in the world be more ridiculous?

Val. What, ſhan't I diſcover where this portrait came from! The difficulty and the myſtery excite my curioſity ſtrangely; for I muſt confeſs that I am actually in love with the object.

Fron. (*aſide.*) Well, this is admirable! He is fallen in love with himſelf.

Val. And yet Angelica, the charming Angelica!——Well, in reality I know nothing of the ſtate of my heart; I muſt have a ſight of this new miſtreſs, before I determine abſolutely on my marriage.

Fron. How, ſir! You will not ſurely——I ſee you are in jeſt.

Val. No, I tell you very ſeriouſly, that I cannot give my hand to Angelica; this uncertainty in my ſentiments would be an obſtacle to our mutual happineſs. I cannot marry her to-day; that is a point reſolved on.

Fron. Yes, with you. But the good old gentleman, your father, hath alſo his little reſolutions apart, and is perhaps the laſt man in the word

world to give them up in complaiſance to others.

Val. I muſt find her out, be the conſequence what it will. Come, Frontin, make haſte, let us make a thorough ſearch: we muſt find her.

Fron. Come, Frontin, make haſte; ay, fly I warrant ye. Let us take an inventory of all the pretty girls in Paris. A fine liſt we ſhall have, truly! The peruſal of ſuch a book would never ſet one to ſleep.

Val. Come, come, make haſte and dreſs me.

Fron. Yes, ſir; but in the mean time, very opportunely, here comes your father. Let him make one of the party.

Val. Silence, you ſcoundrel. How unlucky is this!

SCENE IV.

LISIMON, VALENTINE, FRONTIN.

Liſi. Well, ſon.

Val. Frontin, a chair for my father.

Liſi. I had rather ſtand. I have but a word or two to ſay.

Val. Indeed, ſir, I cannot hear them till you pleaſe to be ſeated.

Liſi. But I don't chuſe to be ſeated. What the devil means the impertinent fop in ſtanding thus upon compliments with his father?

Val. Sir, the reſpect which is due to———

Liſi. The reſpect due to me ſhould conſiſt in being obedient, and not being troubleſome. But how is all this? What! not dreſſed yet? and that upon your wedding-day? This is mighty pretty! What, I ſuppoſe you have not yet viſited Angelica!

Val. I ſhall juſt finiſh my head, and ſhall dreſs

dreſs myſelf immediately to pay my reſpects to her.

Liſi. Does it require all this apparatus to tie up your hair and put on your coat? Zounds! when I was a young fellow, we made better uſe of our time; and inſtead of loſing three parts of the day in taking turns before the looking glaſs, had a better method of getting into the good graces of the ladies.

Val. And yet, ſir, it ſeems to me that a perſon deſirous of being beloved cannot take too much pains to render himſelf amiable, and that a lover attentive to pleaſe ſhould never appear in the garb of a ſloven.

Liſi. Mere nonſenſe. A little negligence becomes a lover. The women are better pleaſed with our impatience than with our throwing away our time at the toilette; and, without affecting ſo much delicacy in dreſs, we ought to have it in the heart. But all this is nothing to the purpoſe. I have a deſign to defer your marriage till the arrival of Leander, in order that he may have the ſatisfaction of being preſent, and that I may have the pleaſure of ſeeing you and your ſiſter married on the ſame day.

Val. (*aſide to Frontin.*) Frontin, is not this lucky?

Fron. Oh yes, ſir, the delay of marriage is always ſo much time gained on repentance.

Liſi. Well, Valentine, what ſay you? It appears to me not quite decent to marry the ſiſter without waiting for the brother, when he is on the road.

Val. I ſay, ſir, it is moſt judiciouſly obſerved.

Liſi. And you are not diſpleaſed at this delay?

Val. My readineſs to obey your commands, ſir,

ſir, will overcome every kind of reluctance.

Liſi. It was out of fear of diſpleaſing you, however, that I did not propoſe it before.

Val. Your will, ſir, is no leſs a rule for my inclinations than my actions.—(*Aſide to Fron.*) What a good creature of a father!

Liſi. I am pleaſed to find you ſo tractable; and you ſhall have the merit of it at an eaſy rate; for by a letter I have juſt now received, Leander informs me that he will be here to-day.

Va. How, ſir!

Liſi. Yes, ſon; and ſo nothing, you ſee, need be altered.

Val. And would you marry him, ſir, the moment of his arrival?

Fron. Ay! Marry a man in his boots and ſpurs!

Liſi. Not ſo, altogether. Beſides, as Lucinda and he have not as yet ſeen each other, it is neceſſary they ſhould have ſome little time to get acquainted. But he may be preſent at the marriage of his ſiſter; and I have not the cruelty to reſtrain any longer the impatient deſires of ſo obedient a ſon as you.

Val. But, ſir——

Liſi. Fear nothing; I know and approve the warmth of your paſſion too much to deceive you.

Val. But, my good father——

Liſi. Leave it to me, I ſay; I know very well what you are going to——

Val. But my dear ſir—I—I—have reflected upon—

Liſi. Reflected! You reflect! I ſhould never have ſuſpected that. Well, ſir, and pray what has been the ſubject of your ſublime meditations?

Val.

Val. The inconveniences of matrimony, ſir.

Fron. A very fertile ſubject, truly.

Liſi. A blockhead, indeed, may ſometimes reflect; but it is never till the folly is committed and paſt remedy. Here again is my ſon Valentine.

Val. How, ſir! committed and paſt remedy! I am not yet married.

Liſi. True, Mr Philoſopher; but you are to know, that there is no difference between my will and my act. What I reſolve on, is as good as done. You ſhould have moralized when I firſt propoſed the match, and you were ſo eager for it. I ſhould then have willingly liſtened to you objections: for you know very well how good-natured I am.

Fron. Yes, yes, ſir, we are all ready to do you juſtice in that reſpect.

Liſi. But at preſent, when every thing is ſettled, you are at liberty to ſpeculate at leiſure; you may indulge your reflections without any prejudice to your marriage.

Val. My apprehenſions, ſir, increaſe my reluctance. Think of the importance of the affair, I intreat you, and delay it a few days.

Liſi. Good-day to you, Valentine; you will be married this evening, or——you underſtand me. How was I duped by the pretended obedience of this equivocating raſcal! [*Exit.*

SCENE V.

VALENTINE, FRONTIN.

Val. Heavens! How his obſtinacy diſtreſſes me!

Fron. Yes, ſir, it is even ſo: married or diſinherited. You muſt either be tied to poverty

or

or a woman. To be ſure, the preference is doubtful.

Val. Doubtful! No. My choice was before uncertain, but my father's inflexibility hath determined me.

Fron. In favour of Angelica?

Val. No. To the contrary.

Fron. I congratulate you, ſir, on ſo heroic a reſolution. You are determined then to ſtarve, a worthy martyr to liberty. But if you were required to marry the original of the portrait, I ſuppoſe matrimony would not appear quite ſo terrible, ha!

Val. No. But if my father pretends to compel me, I believe I ſhall reſiſt his importunity with equal obſtinacy. And yet I perceive my heart would bring me back to Angelica, if it were attempted to force me from her.

Fron. Very tractable indeed! I ſee, whether you inherit your father's fortune or no, you will inherit at leaſt his virtues. (*He looks earneſtly at the picture, and gives a loud ſigh.*) Ah!

Val. What's the matter?

Fron. Since our diſgrace, this portrait ſeems to me to have aſſumed a kind of family countenance; a certain chop-fallen——

Val. It is throwing away time to liſten to this impertinence. We ſhould by this time have been all over Paris. *Exit haſtily.*

Fron. Ay, keep up to that pace, and you will ſoon be the whole town over. I will go and wait the iſſue in the ſnug corner of ſome tavern, that he may think I have been upon the ſearch too.

SCENE

SCENE VI.

ANGELICA, MARTHA.

Mar. Ha! ha! ha! What a diverting ſcene! Who could have thought it? O madam, what have you loſt by not being on the watch with me, to have ſeen him ſo enamoured with his own charms!

Ang. He ſaw them doubtleſs with my eyes.

Mar. And can you have ſtill the weakneſs to entertain a paſſion for a man capable of ſuch extravagance?

Ang. It appears to you then very criminal? But what can he be reproached with more than the common vice of his age? Think not, however, that I am inſenſible of this injuſtice done me by the Chevalier: I am afflicted that he ſhould thus prefer the firſt agreeable face that preſents itſelf; and have too much love, not to have ſome delicacy. Nay, Valentine ſhall either make a ſacrifice of his follies to me to-day, or I ſhall make a ſacrifice of my paſſion to the dictates of reaſon.

Mar. I am afraid, madam, the one will be juſt as difficult as the other.

Ang. Here is Lucinda. My brother is expected to-day. Take care that ſhe does not ſuſpect him to be her *incognito*, till every thing be ripe for the diſcovery.

SCENE VII.

LUCINDA, ANGELICA, MARTHA.

Mar. I will lay you a wager, madam Lucinda, you will never gueſs what has been the effect of our ſcheme. You will laugh moſt immoderately at the ſucceſs of the picture.

Luc. Oh, Martha, I cannot trouble my head about the portrait now. I have other things to mind. My dear Angelica, I am diſtracted, ruined, and undone. Now is the time I ſtand in need of all your aſſiſtance. My father hath juſt informed me of the arrival of Leander; inſiſting upon my receiving him as a ſuitor to-day, and to give him my hand in a week's time.

Ang. And what is there ſo terrible in all this?

Mar. Not terrible, ma'am! What, to marry a fine young lady of eighteen, to a handſome rich young fellow of twenty-two! Bleſs me, it is enough to make one tremble all over; and I am ſure there is not a young girl in all Paris come to years of diſcretion, whom the very notion of ſuch a marriage would not throw into a fever.

Luc. I will conceal nothing from you, Angelica. I have at the ſame time juſt received a letter from Cleontes, whom I expect every moment from Paris, to make propoſals to your father. He conjures me to delay my marriage; in ſhort, he ſtill loves me. Oh, my dear friend, can you be inſenſible to the agitation of my heart? By that friendſhip which you have ever profeſſed——

Ang. The more value I ſet on that friendſhip, the more I wiſh to confirm it by your marriage with my brother. However, your happineſs, Lucinda, is the firſt object of my wiſhes; which are more conformable to yours than you may imagine.

Luc. Recollect your promiſes then, Lucinda, and give Leander to underſtand that my heart never can be his; that——

Mar. Nay, madam, make no raſh declarations,

tions. The men have ſo many arts, and the women ſo much inconſtancy, that, if Leander ſhould take it into his head to make love to you, I'd lay a wager, he'd carry his point in ſpite of your teeth.

Luc. Pray, Mrs Martha——

Mar. I would not give him above two days to ſupplant your incognito, and that without cauſing you the leaſt regret.

Luc. Prithee, mind your own affairs——It is on you, my dear Angelica, I rely in the midſt of this trouble. I ſhall uſe all my influence with my father, to defer, if poſſible, a marriage which the pre-engagement of my heart makes me look upon with horror. [*Exit.*

Ang. Now ſhould I prevent her going to her father; but I know Liſimon is not a man to be moved by the ſolicitations of his daughter, whoſe intreaties will only ſerve to render him the more determined on a marriage which ſhe as much wiſhes for as ſhe ſeems to dread. If I divert myſelf a little with her preſent uneaſineſs, it is only to render the event more agreeable when ſhe is undeceived. Indeed, this is all the revenge our friendſhip will permit.

Mar. I will follow her, however, madam, to prevent her, if poſſible, doing any thing ridiculous, without betraying your ſecret.

SCENE VIII.

ANGELICA *ſola.*

What an inſenſible creature am I, to amuſe myſelf thus, when I have ſo many things that lie at my heart! Perhaps even now Valentine is repeating his infidelity. Or perhaps he hath

diſcovered the impoſition, and out of reſentment makes an offer of his heart to ſome other object. For men are ſuch ſtrange creatures, that they never reſent any thing ſo much as when they are in the wrong. But here he comes, taken up in contemplation of his portrait.

SCENE IX.

ANGELICA, VALENTINE.

Val. (*not ſeeing Ang.*) I ramble about without knowing where to look for this charming object. Oh that love would direct me in the ſearch!

Ang. (*aſide.*) Ungrateful creature! he directs you but too well.

Val. Thus love is always attended with its diſquietudes; and becauſe I am not under the ſolicitude of making myſelf beloved, I muſt ſuffer the torment of looking in vain for a beloved object.

Ang. (*aſide.*) What ſtrange impertinence! How is it poſſible to be at once ſo amiable and ſo ſilly!

Val. I muſt ſtay for the return of Frontin. He may poſſibly have been more ſucceſsful. But at the worſt, Angelica loves me.

Ang. (*aſide.*) Ah, traitor! You are but too ſenſible of my weakneſs.

Val. After all, I ſhall ſtand no bad chance with her; her goodneſs of diſpoſition, her charms——

Ang. (*aſide.*) He does me the honour to take up with me at the worſt.

Val. How unaccountable are my ſentiments! I renounce the poſſeſſion of a charming object,

to

to which I find my heart at bottom ſincerely devoted; I expoſe myſelf to the reſentment of my father, to run after a miſtreſs, perhaps unworthy of my ſolicitude, perhaps merely imaginary, and that ſolely at the inſtigation of a portrait dropt from the clouds, and no doubt a flattering one. What caprice! what folly! But then theſe caprices and follies are an amuſement, a relief to an agreeable man. (*He looks at the portrait.*) What graces! What features! How enchanting! How divine! No, no, Angelica muſt not flatter herſelf that ſhe can bear any compariſon with ſuch beauty.

Ang. (*ſnatching the portrait out of his hand.*) To be ſure, I ſhall not pretend to it. But pray, let me ſhare in your admiration of it. A ſenſe of the charms of my rival, will mitigate, at leaſt, the diſgrace of my defeat.

Val. O heavens!

Ang. Well, ſir, what have you to ſay? You ſeem confounded. I did not think a petit-maitre could have been ſo eaſily put out of countenance.

Val. Cruel Angelica! But you know the aſcendant you have over me, and therefore may inſult me without reply.

Ang. To be ſure, I am greatly in the wrong: and of right, doubtleſs, you ſhould reproach me. Come, ſir, I will have pity on your embarraſſment. There is your portrait; and I am the leſs diſpleaſed to find you are in love with the original, as my ſentiments are in that reſpect perfectly agreeable to yours.

Val. How! Do you know the perſon of the original?

Ang. I not only know, but can aſſure you I love that perſon better than any other in the world.

Val. Indeed! That is new to me, and the language ſomething ſingular too in the mouth of a rival.

Ang. I know nothing of that; but what I ſay is very ſincere.——If he is piqued, I triumph. (*Aſide.*)

Val. She has then a great deal of merit, you ſay.

Ang. It depends only on herſelf to have an infinite deal.

Val. What! No faults at all?

Ang. Oh yes, a great many. It is a little, whimſical, capricious, fickle, flighty thing; whoſe vanity is inſupportable. But what of that? She is amiable, notwithſtanding all this; and I can fortel already, that you will love this giddy creature as long as you live.

Val. And you conſent to it—Ha!

Ang. Yes.

Val. And are not diſpleaſed at it?

Ang. No.

Val. (*aſide.*) Her indifference diſtracts me. ——(*To Angelica aloud.*) And may I flatter myſelf you will renew your acquaintance with her in my favour?

Ang. I deſire nothing more ardently.

Val. (*in a tone of anger and reſentment.*) You ſay all this with a tranquillity that charms me.

Ang. How! You juſt now complained of my raillery, and now are angry at my indifference. There is no knowing how to deal with you.

Val. (*aſide.*) I ſhall burſt with ſpleen.—— (*Aloud to Angelica.*) Will you do me the favour, madam, to bring me acquainted with the lady?

Ang. This is not a piece of ſervice, I am ſure, you expected of me; but I will be better than your

your expectations for once, and promiſe you I will.

Val. It muſt be in a ſhort time.

Ang. Perhaps this very day.

Val. I can no longer contain myſelf. (*Going out.*)

Ang. (*aſide.*) This is a good omen: he hath too much anger not to have more love. (*Calling after him*) Where are you going, Valentine?

Val. I ſee my company is diſagreeable, madam, and therefore was going out.

Ang. Oh no, I am juſt going myſelf; it is not fair to drive you out of your own apartments.

Val. Go, then; and remember, that thoſe who have no love themſelves, deſerve not to be loved by others.

Ang. And yet it is better to have no love at all, than to be in love with one's ſelf.

SCENE X.

VALENTINE *ſolus.*

In love with one's ſelf! Is it a crime to ſet a juſt value on one's own accompliſhments? I am, however, greatly mortified. Is it poſſible for her to give up ſuch a lover as I am, without concern? One would think ſhe looks upon me as an ordinary perſon. It is in vain to diſguiſe the trouble I feel; and, indeed, I am almoſt afraid to love her after this proof of her inconſtancy. But—No—my whole heart is at preſent taken up in the contemplation of this charming object. I will renew my ſearch, and to the care of enſuring my own happineſs, add that of exciting the jealouſy of Angelica. Oh! here is Frontin.

SCENE

SCENE XI.

VALENTINE, FRONTIN *drunk.*

Fron. What the devil, can't I walk upright yet? Come, cheer up.

Val. Well, Frontin, have you found——

Fron. O yes, ſir.

Val. Heav'ns! is it poſſible?

Fron. But I have taken a world of trouble.

Val. Well, come, tell me—where?

Fron. I have run about among all the taverns in this part of the town.

Val. The taverns!

Fron. But I have ſucceeded beyond my expectations.

Val. Tell me then; how was it?

Fron. It was a—a—a—

Val. What the devil is this vile animal muttering about?

Fron. Stay, ſir, ſtay; let me tell you in method and order.

Val. Silence, you drunken raſcal; or give me a direct anſwer about the original of the portrait.

Fron. O ay, the original. True. Rejoice, ſir, rejoice; good news, I ſay.

Val. Well.

Fron. It was neither at the White-Croſs, nor at the Golden Lion, nor at the Pine-Apple, nor——

Val. When will you ſpeak to the purpoſe, raſcal?

Fron. Patience, ſir, patience; as it was not there, it muſt of courſe be elſewhere; and——

Oh,

Oh, never fear but I ſhall come to it—I ſhall come to it.

Val. I have a good mind to knock the fellow on the head. I cannot bear him any longer.

SCENE XII.

FRONTIN *ſolus.*

To be ſure, I am a very pretty fellow.—— This floor is deviliſh rough.——Where was I? Faith I am quite out. Ah! if I did but——

SCENE XIII.

LUCINDA, FRONTIN.

Luc. Frontin, where is your maſter?

Fron. Gone in ſearch of himſelf.

Luc. In ſearch of himſelf!

Fron. Ay, to be married to himſelf.

Luc. What's the meaning of this nonſenſe?

Fron. Nonſenſe! What, you don't underſtand it then?

Luc. No, truly.

Fron. Faith, nor I neither; I will explain it to you, however, if you pleaſe.

Luc. What, will you explain what you don't underſtand yourſelf?

Fron. Oh, Madam, I have been at college.

Luc. You have been at the tavern, I believe. He's certainly drunk. Come, Frontin, collect your ſenſes a little, and endeavour to make yourſelf underſtood.

Fron. Nothing in the world is more eaſy. Stay. The portrait that you metamor—no, not metamor——yes, metamorphoſed. That is to ſay, my maſter,——that is, I mean a young lady,—

lady,—between whom you made ſuch a mixture——I found it all out—you could not impoſe upon me. Ha!—Can any body ſpeak more plainly?

Luc. Oh no, 'tis impoſſible.

Fron. Every body elſe but my maſter can underſtand me: but he is fallen in love with his own picture.

Luc. What! without knowing it.

Fron. Yes, and that is what makes it ſo extraordinary.

Lu. I comprehend all the reſt. But who could foreſee that? Run quickly, good Frontin, fly, and find out your maſter: tell him I have ſomething of the utmoſt conſequence to communicate to him. But take particular care not to let him know any thing of your ſuſpicions. Hold: there's ſomething for you——

(*Gives him money.*)

Fron. To drink, madam; is it not?

Lu. Oh no, you have no occaſion for drink.

Fron. By way of huſh-money, then.

SCENE XIV.

LUCINDA *ſola.*

I will not heſitate a moment, but confeſs the whole, whatever be the conſequence; I cannot bear a brother ſo dear to me ſhould make himſelf ridiculous, by the very means that were employed to cure him. How unhappy am I? I have diſobliged my brother; my father, irritated by my reluctance to be married, is only the more abſolute; my lover is abſent, and in no condition to relieve me. I am afraid of being betrayed by my friend, and the ſtratagems of a man

man I cannot bear; for I certainly hate Leander, and ſhould prefer death to being married to him.

SCENE XV.

ANGELICA, LUCINDA, MARTHA.

Ang. Come, come, comfort yourſelf, Lucinda; Leander will do you no great hurt. I muſt confeſs, however, that he was deſirous of ſeeing you without your knowing it.

Luc. Alas! ſo much the worſe.

Ang. But do you know that his behaviour was none of the moſt civil on the occaſion?

Mar. Oh, only a little vein of family-humour.

Luc. Good God! how provoking you are! Well, after he ſaw me, what did he ſay?

Ang. He ſaid he ſhould be very ſorry to have you againſt your conſent.

Mar. He even ſaid, your repugnance to him gave him ſome pleaſure. But he ſaid this with a comical air———

Luc. This mode of obedience is certainly not very polite.

Mar. To be polite with other women, it is not neceſſary to be always ſo very obedient.

Ang. The only condition of his renunciation is, that you receive his viſit of leave.

Luc. Oh no. I ſhall excuſe him that ceremony.

Ang. Nay, but you cannot refuſe him that. Beſides, I engaged for you that you ſhould do it. And indeed, I muſt acquaint you in confidence, that he depends greatly upon the ſucceſs of that interview; flattering himſelf that, when you have ſeen him, you will have no objection to his alliance.

Luc.

Luc. He muſt have a conſiderable ſhare of vanity, then.

Mar. He conceives he ſhall be able to captivate you.

Ang. And it is in conſequence of this expectation that he has conſented to the treaty I propoſed.

Mar. I'll anſwer for it he would not have accepted the bargain, but that he was very ſure you would not take him at his word.

Luc. He muſt be ſurely an inſupportable blockhead. Well, he need but make his appearance; I long to ſee how he will diſplay his charms; and I will give you my word it ſhall be with an air——Let him come, let him come; he wants a lecture, and depend upon it he ſhall receive an inſtructive one.

Ang. Well, we ſhall ſee, my dear Lucinda; but we do not always abide by our reſolutions: I would venture to lay a wager he will ſoften you.

Mar. Ah! theſe men are monſtrouſly artful; you will ſee he will win upon you.

Luc. Make yourſelf eaſy about that.

Ang. Well, look to yourſelf. You cannot ſay we did not caution you.

Mar. Ay, it is not our fault, if you ſuffer yourſelf to be ſurpriſed.

Luc. Well, really I believe you will make me crazy between you.

Ang. (*to Martha.*) We have worked her up to the pitch——(*Aloud to Lucinda.*) Well, ſince you will have it ſo, Martha will go and introduce him.

Luc. What's that?

Mar. We only left him in the anti-chamber, madam. He will be here in a moment. (*Exit.*

Luc.

Luc. Oh that my dear Cleontes were here, that he might ſee in what manner I receive his rival!

SCENE XVI.

ANGELICA, LUCINDA, MARTHA, LEANDER.

Ang. Come in, Leander, and know Lucinda's ſentiments from herſelf. She imagines ſhe hates you, and is doing herſelf violence to give you a bad reception: but I will anſwer for it, that all thoſe appearances of hatred are in fact ſo many proofs of her love for you.

Luc. (*turning her head away from Leander.*) On that ſuppoſition, he muſt be highly in favour indeed. Contemptible!

Ang. Lucinda! Doth your reſentment get the better of your manners, child? Don't you look at the gentleman?

Lea. If it be my paſſion which excites your reſentment, behold a criminal indeed. (*Falling on his knees to Lucinda.*)

Luc. Ah! Cleontes! Provoking Angelica!

Lea. Leander hath diſpleaſed you too much for me to hope to receive, under that name, the favours I experienced under that of Cleontes. But, if the motives of my diſguiſe may juſtify the effect of it, you will pardon the delicacy of an heart whoſe weakneſs was the deſire of being beloved ſolely for its own ſake.

Luc. Riſe, Leander. An exceſs of delicacy can offend only thoſe who are themſelves deſtitute of it. Mine is fully ſatisfied with this proof of yours, as yours ought to be with its ſucceſs. But, as for you, my dear Angelica, how could

you have the cruelty thus to amuſe yourſelf with my diſtreſſes?

Ang. You certainly have great reaſon to complain. You are both happy, while I am ſubjected to a thouſand anxieties.

Lea. And have you, my dear ſiſter, been labouring for my happineſs, while your own hath been at ſtake? This is ſuch goodneſs as I ſhall never forget. (*He kiſſes her hand.*)

SCENE. XVII.

LEANDER, VALENTINE, ANGELICA, LUCINDA, MARTHA.

Val. (*obſerving Leander and Angelica.*) So—So—Nay, let not my preſence lay you under any reſtraint. I find I did not know, madam, the full extent of your conqueſts. I was a ſtranger to the happy object of your preference; and ſhall have the mortification to remember, that, after having been ſo long your faithful votary, Valentine hath been the perſon moſt injured.

Ang. It will be better ſo than you imagine; in fact, you ſtand in need of a leſſon or two of modeſty.

Val. How, madam! do you join raillery to inſult? Have you the effrontery to applaud yourſelf for what you ought to bluſh at?

Ang. Oh, ſir, if you are angry, I leave you: I am not fond of being abuſed.

Val. No, madam, you ſhall ſtay if you pleaſe; I will have the ſatisfaction of being witneſs to your confuſion.

Ang. Well, Sir, enjoy that ſatisfaction.

Val. For I hope you have not the aſſurance to attempt your juſtification.

Ang.

Ang. You need not fear it.

Val. And that you don't flatter yourſelf I retain the ſmalleſt ſentiments in your favour.

Ang. My opinion on that ſubject will make no difference in the thing.

Val. I proteſt to you, I am determined forthe future to hate you.

Ang. Very well, ſir.

Val. (*Taking out the portrait.*) And this ſhall be the only object of my affection.

Ang. You are much in the right of it, ſir; and I proteſt to you, that I have an attachment to this gentleman (*turning to her brother*) by no means inferior to yours for the original of that portrait.

Val. Ungrateful woman! Death is then my only refuge.

Ang. A word with you, Valentine. I really pity your ſituation. But you muſt confeſs, that you are the moſt unjuſt of mankind, to take fire at an apparent inconſtancy, of which you yourſelf have ſet me the example: but my good nature is ſtill greater than your extravagance.

Val. You will ſee ſhe will do me the favour to forgive me?

Ang. Why really, you do not deſerve it. I will tell you, however, upon what conditions I may be brought to do it. You have heretofore profeſſed ſentiments for me, to which I made too tender a return for ſuch ingratitude. You have, nevertheleſs, injured me, by conceiving an extravagant and fantaſtical paſſion, at ſight of a mere picture; with all the levity, and I will add folly, of your age and character. We are not now to examine whether I ought to have imitated your behaviour; nor does it become

you, who are guilty, to cenſure my conduct.

Val. Not become me! Good God! But let us ſee what all this fine diſcourſe tends to.

Ang. It tends to this. I told you I knew the object of your new paſſion; and that was true. I added, that I loved that object tenderly; and this was but too true. In avowing its merit, I did not diſguiſe its faults. I did more; I promiſed to bring you acquainted with that object. And I now give you my word to do it this very day, even this very hour: for I can aſſure you, it is much nearer you than you imagine.

Val. What am I to underſtand by all this?

Ang. Pray, don't interrupt me. The truth, in fine, obliges me to ſay again, That perſon ardently loves you; and I can anſwer for ſuch attachment, as well as for my own. It is now your buſineſs to make choice, between that object and me, of the perſon on whom you are determined to beſtow all your tenderneſs. Chuſe, Chevalier; but chuſe immediately, and that for ever.

Mar. A pleaſant alternative this! How deviliſhly my gentleman is embarraſſed! Be ruled by me, ſir, take the portrait, and you will be ſure to have no rivals.

Luc. Oh! Valentine, is it neceſſary to heſitate ſo long, to follow the dictates of your heart?

Val. (*throwing the picture away, an keel ing to Angelica.*) The conflict is over—You have conquered, my dear Angelica, and I feel how much inferior the ſentiments which ariſe from caprice are to thoſe which are inſpired by a love for you. (*Martha picks up the portrait, and gives it to Angelica.*) But alas! tho' my heart re-

returns to you, may I flatter myſelf it will recover yours?

Ang. You may judge of my acknowledgments by the ſacrifice you have made me. Riſe, Valentine, and contemplate theſe features.

(*Holding out the portrait.*)

Lea. (*looking alſo on the portrait.*) Sure I ſhould know that face!——Hold——Yes, faith it is——it is he himſelf.

Val. He! who? You mean ſhe. It is a woman, whom I renounce together with the whole ſex, and that for ever, in favour of Angelica.

Ang. Yes, Valentine; it has been a mere woman hitherto: but I hope for the future to find him a man, ſuperior to all thoſe little foibles which degrade his ſex and character.

Val. You ſurpriſe me ſtrangely.

Ang. You ought the leſs to be ignorant of this object, as you have had the moſt intimate connection with it, and certainly cannot be accuſed of having neglected it. Take away but that effeminate drapery by which your ſiſter hath diſguiſed it, and you will ſee it is——

Val. Myſelf?—Heavens! what do I ſee?

Mar. Is it not plain? You here ſee the portrait, and there the original.

Val. I ſhall die with ſhame.

Mar. You are the firſt perſon of the character, perhaps, that ever knew what ſhame was.

(*Aſide.*)

Ang. Ungrateful man! Was I wrong to ſay, I loved the original of this picture?

Val. I will love it for the future, only becauſe it loves you.

Ang. To confirm our reconciliation, I am ſure

you will have no objection to my preſenting to you my brother Leander.

Lea. Permit me, ſir———

Val. Oh heavens! this is the ſummit of felicity; and was not Angelica falſe when I was ungrateful!

Luc. In taking part with your happineſs, brother, my own is augmented.

SCENE XVIII.

LISIMON, FRONTIN, *with the perſons of the foregoing ſcene.*

Liſi. Ha! I ſee you are all met together very opportunely. You, Valentine and Lucinda, having refuſed to marry agreeable to my inclinations, I at firſt intended to compel you; but I have reflected that it is ſometimes neceſſary to act the part of a good father, and that conſtraint does not always make happy marriages. I have, therefore, determined to break off all the former connections, and to enter upon new ones. I will marry Angelica myſelf. Lucinda ſhall go into a convent; Valentine ſhall be diſinherited; and as to you, Leander, you muſt have patience.

Mar. Excellently well determined, faith.

Liſi. How's this? You all look confounded.

Fron. I'll be hang'd if any of them can open their lips. Plague take all fooliſh lovers, I ſay.

Liſi. Come, come; now you know my mind, and have nothing to do but to conform to it.

Lea. Hold, ſir, hold; condeſcend to delay your ſentence a little. Don't you read repentance in the looks and perplexity of the offenders? And would you involve the innocent in the ſame puniſhment?

Liſi.

Liſi. Well, I will be ſo weak as to make another trial of their obedience. Let us ſee. Come, Mr Valentine, do you ſtill make your reflections on matrimony?

Val. Yes, ſir. But inſtead of its inconveniences, I ſee nothing in that ſtate but happineſs.

Liſi. Oh ho! you have chang'd your note, I ſee. And you, Mrs Lucinda, are you ſo fond of liberty ſtill?

Luc. I am ſenſible, the loſs of it, ſir, muſt be pleaſing, when our duty requires it to be given up.

Liſi. Ay, now you talk like reaſonable creatures. Now you give me pleaſure. Let me embrace my children; come, we will haſten to the celebration of your happy nuptials. A little exertion of authority, I ſee, is ſometimes very proper.

Val. Well, my fair Angelica, you have cured me of a foible which was the diſgrace of my youth; and for the future, I hope to experience in your ſociety, that when we truly love another, we ceaſe to be fond of ourſelves.

THE

VILLAGE CONJURER.

AN INTERLUDE.

Repreſented before his Majeſty at Fontainebleau, on the 18th and 24th of October 1752; and at Paris, by the Royal Academy of Muſic, on Thurſday the firſt of March 1753.

TO

MR DU CLOS,

Hiſtoriographer of France, one of the Forty Members of the French Academy, and Member of the Academy of Belles Lettres.

PERMIT me, Sir, to place your name at the head of a work, which, without your patronage, had never been repreſented or made public. May this my firſt and only dedication, do as much honour to you as it does to myſelf.

I am, Sir,

Your very humble

and moſt obedient Servant,

J. J. ROUSSEAU.

PERSONS of the DRAMA.

COLIN,	Mr Jelyote.
COLINET,	Mademoiſelle Fel.
The CONJURER,	Mr Cuvillier.

Young Villagers of both ſexes.

THE VILLAGE CONJURER.

AN INTERLUDE.

The Theatre repreſents, on one ſide, the houſe of the Conjurer: On the other, Trees and Fountains. A view of a Hamlet in the Front.

SCENE I.

Enter COLINET, *ſighing, and wiping her eyes with her apron.*

ALAS! inconſtant Colin's flown,
And in tears hath left to moan
Unhappy Colinet!

Bewail I muſt the fickle youth,
Whom loſt to me, to love and truth,
I would but can't forget.

Yes, inconſtant Colin's flown,
And in tears hath left to moan
Unhappy Colinet.

He lov'd me once, unhappy me!
But now ſome fairer maid prefers;
Who like myſelf will ſlighted be,
And my complaint in turn be her's.

But about my wretched fate
Wherefore ſhould I thus debate,

Since it only makes me fret?
Yes, inconſtant Colin's flown,
And in tears hath left to moan
Unhappy Colinet.

I ought to hate him——and I will——
But perhaps he loves me ſtill:
For why ſhould now the lover fly,
Who was once for ever nigh?

I'll aſk the cunning man who here doth dwell;
He reads the ſtars, and can my fortune tell—
Oh! here he comes alone—that happens well.

SCENE. II.

The CONJURER and COLINET.

[*While the* Conjurer *ſlowly advances forward,* Colinet *counts out ſome money into her hand, then wraps it up in a piece of paper, and, going up to him, offers it with much heſitation.*]

COLINET, *with an air of great timidity.*

Say, will Colin always fly!
Tell me if I'm doom'd to die.

The CONJURER, *with an affected ſolemnity.*

I Colin's heart, and alſo thine, have read.

COLINET.

Oh! Heavens!

CONJURER.

Have patience.

COLINET.

What, when Colin's fled?

CONJURER.

Colin unfaithful——

Co-

COLINET.

Colinet will kill.

CONJURER.

And yet, believe me, Colin loves you ſtill.

COLINET, *eagerly.*

How ſay you! what——

CONJURER.

Our Manor-lady's charms.

An artful woman——

COLINET.

Wins him from my arms.

CONJURER.

Already I've declared he loves you ſtill.

COLINET, *ſorrowfully.*

And yet he ſhuns me.

CONJURER.

Truſt my magic ſkill.

I the rover will reclaim,
Whoſe vanity's alone to blame;
Gaudy dreſs and rich attire
Set his giddy heart on fire.
But his love ſhall ſoon repair
All your wrongs, and ſoothe your care.

COLINET.

Had not I to the youth of the city,
So proud all around me to bow,
Been deaf when they ſaid I was pretty,
I ſhould have had ſuitors enow.

Bedizen'd in richeſt array,
With ribbands, and flounces, and lace,
I might have gone gallant and gay,
As fine as the beſt in the place.

But I, for a falſe-hearted ſwain,
Have all their fine offers deſpiſed;

Leſs handſome content to remain,
To be true to the man that I priz'd.

CONJURER.

His heart ſhall be reclaim'd: that taſk is mine;
The better, to preſerve it, muſt be thine.

If his paſſion you'd augment,
You muſt feign your own declines;
Love decays beneath content,
And increaſes as it pines.
Hence the nymph's coquettiſh vein
Conſtant makes the roving ſwain.

COLINET.

By your advice I'm led, now wiſer grown.

CONJURER.

Aſſume with Colin, then, a different tone.

COLINET.

I will, and by his conduct guide my own.

CONJURER.

Not ſo in fact, but ſo that he
The quaint deception may not ſee.
But, hold; my art informs me Colin's near;
Be thou at hand, and when I call appear.

SCENE III.

CONJURER, *ſolus.*

Theſe lovers in ſimplicity impart
What they conceive I gather from my art;

And

And then admiring ſtand, while I unfold,
With ſkill profound, what they before have told.
I, by their means, my full revenge will take:
Colin his haughty lady ſhall forſake;
Who, ſeeing him to Colinet return,
With jealous rage and ſhame in vain will burn.

SCENE IV.

CONJURER, and COLIN.

COLIN.

Love and your good advice have made me wiſe
For Colinet, I all the world deſpiſe.
She lov'd me when a ſhepherd's frock I wore;
And in embroider'd ſuits what can ſhe more?

CONJURER.

Colin, 'tis now too late, for Colinet
Hath quite forgot you——

COLIN.

Heav'ns! and can ſhe change?

CONJURER.

No woman young and pretty fail'd e'er yet,
On an inconſtant ſwain to take revenge.

COLIN.

If my Colinet deceive me,
Plighted were my vows in vain;
No, ſhe never ſure can leave me,
Never love another ſwain.

CONJURER.

True, Colinet prefers no other clown,
But ſome fine lord or gentleman from town.

COLIN.

Who told you this?

CONJURER.

——My art hath found it out.

COLIN.

Then of the truth, alas! there is no doubt.
How dear my late inconſtancy will coſt,
If Colinet I have for ever loſt!

CONJURER.

Doubtleſs, it ſomething coſts to go ſo fine:
But love and riches different ways incline.

COLIN.

Let me intreat you then the means impart
To ſhun my ruin——

CONJURER.

I'll conſult my art.

The Conjurer takes a book out of his pocket, and with his wand makes a circle. While he is thus employed, the young peaſants come in to conſult him; but, affrighted at his contorſions, let fall their preſents, and run away.

CONJURER.

The charm is done; and Colinet is near.
Wait till ſhe comes.

COLIN.

Alas! but will ſhe hear,
If I ſhould ſue to ſoften her diſdain?

CONJURER.

A faithful heart may favour hope to gain.
But now, young ſhepherd, I muſt leave ye,
(*Aſide*) To prepare her to receive ye.

SCENE

SCENE V.

COLIN *ſolus.*

Now my dream of grandeur's o'er,
Riches ſhall ne'er tempt me more;
Let but Colinet be true,
Welcome her, and wealth adieu;
If my tears and ſighs may move
Colinet again to love,
All the joys I knew before
She to Colin will reſtore.

When love we can feel and impart,
'Tis all that is wanting below;
Then Colinet, give me thy heart,
For Colin's was thine long ago.

My pipe, crook, and ſcrip by my ſide,
My whole future grandeur ſhall be;
My Colinet's favours my pride,
And her ſmiles worth a kingdom to me.

To lords, and fine folks of the town,
If ſhe but thoſe favours deny;
In ſpite of their wealth and renown,
They'll not be ſo happy as I.

SCENE VI.

COLIN, COLINET *gaily dreſſed.*

COLIN, *aſide.*

I ſee her coming; but I dread to ſtay,
And yet I loſe her if I ſlink away.

COLINET, *aſide.*

He ſees me — how my flutt'ring heart doth beat!

Co-

COLIN, *aſide.*

What ails me!

COLINET, *aſide.*

How! ſo near! I can't retreat.

COLIN, *aſide.*

I cannot ſhun her, and muſt therefore meet.

He ſpeaks to Colinet *in a pathetic tone, half ſmiling, yet embarraſſed.*

COLIN.

Ah! why from Colin turn with ſuch diſdain!
Hath not my ſhepherdeſs one look for me?

COLINET.

No. Colin lov'd, and was a faithful ſwain:
I look on you; but ah! you are not he.

COLIN.

My heart is ſtill the ſame, tho' led aſtray
By ſome bewitching and malicious ſpright;
Whoſe charm our good magician taught to ſway:
I'm Colin ſtill, and you my ſole delight.

COLINET.

I, in my turn, by magic too am ſway'd,
Above his art——

COLIN.

Then I am wretched made:

COLINET.

My new admirer's conſtant——

COLIN.

Oh! 'tis death!
Your falſehood——

Co-

COLINET.

Nay, forbear this waſte of breath.
Shepherd, give complaining o'er,
I can never love you more.

COLIN.

Who by force your hand can take?
Better, then, conſult your heart;
For if mine be doom'd to break,
Thine will feel as grievous ſmart.

COLINET.

No, no. Alas! you've once deceiv'd,
And never more can be believ'd.

COLIN.

Is't then determin'd you would have me die?
Far from this hamlet will poor Colin fly.

[Colin *moves ſlowly away, on which* Colinet *calls him back.*]

COLINET.

Colin———

COLIN.

Well?

COLINET.

Go you hence?

COLIN.

What, ſhall I ſtay,
To ſee you to another lover ſtray?

COLINET.

When Colin I knew how to pleaſe,
I look'd on my fortune as bleſt.

COLIN.

While my ſhepherdeſs lov'd, at my eaſe
I liv'd, and my heart was at reſt.

Co-

COLINET.

But ſoon as my love he deſpis'd,
I favour'd a faithfuller ſwain;

COLIN.

Since broken the fetters I priz'd,
No joys for poor Colin remain.
(*In a pathetic tone.*)
Ah! Colinet! and muſt we part?

COLINET.

I dread a wild inconſtant heart.

Both together.

Come then, diſengaged and free,
Let us mutually agree,
To forget, if that can be,
I lov'd you, or you lov'd me.

COLIN.

And yet, tho' wealth and beauty join'd,
Lately tempting, wak'd my pride;
To Colinet my heart inclin'd,
I all the world deſpis'd beſide.

COLINET.

Tho' to-day a noble youth
Vow'd and ſwore eternal truth,
Colin I preferr'd by far
To his ribband and his ſtar.

COLIN, *pathetically.*

Ah Colinet!

COLINET, *ſighing.*

Ah roving ſwain!
Muſt my heart ſtill yours remain?

Co-

[Colin *kneels at the feet of* Colinet, *who pointing to a gaudy ribband which the lady had put in his hat, he ſnatches it out, and throws it away with diſdain.* Colinet *then gives him a plain one, which ſhe herſelf wore, and which he receives with tranſport.*]

Both together.

Oh! let the prieſt our hands unite;
While our mutual troths we plight,
From each other ne'er to ſtray,
But the laws of love obey.

SCENE VII.

COLIN, COLINET, CONJURER.

CONJURER.

Thus freed from cruel charms, confeſs my ſkill,
And, ſpite of envy, love each other ſtill.

COLIN, (*while both the lovers offer the Conjurer money.*)

What preſent, for ſuch ſervice, can be made?

CONJURER.

If you are happy, I am well repaid.

Hither, lovely nymphs and ſwains,
Come, and join this happy pair;
Celebrate, in ſprightly ſtrains,
Joys yourſelves ſhould learn to ſhare.

SCENE

SCENE VIII.

CONJURER, COLIN, COLINET, *young lads and laſſes of the village.*

CHORUS of Villagers.

Let us celebrate Colin's return
To his Colinet faithful and true;
May both with their old paſſion burn,
And every day think it new.

Let us ſing of our Conjurer's art,
Who knows to reclaim by his ſkill
The wild and inconſtant of heart,
And make lovers happy at will.

COLIN.

Tho' dark is my cottage, and low;
While open to weather and care,
To the ſun and the wind and the ſnow,
It often calls out for repair:

Yet there if my ſhepherdeſs deigns
To reſide, I ſhould feel no regret;
But Colin, the happy'ſt of ſwains,
Will be bleſt with his dear Colinet.

In the fields and the meadows all day,
With pleaſure returning at eve,
I'll meet her with joy on the way,
And with kiſſes her welcome receive.

Till the ſun ſhall be up in the morn
I will ſing of our loves with delight,
Old care and rough weather will ſcorn,
While in raptures we ſpend all the night.

Here a dance.

CONJURER.

While the nymphs and ſwains advance,
Vying in the ſprightly dance;
I, who cannot boaſt ſuch eaſe,
Have a ſong perhaps may pleaſe.

He takes a ballad out of his pocket, and ſings.

I.

Love may help receive from art,
Tho' alone it wins the heart;
Thus fine folks that lovelier be,
Love not half ſo well as we.

Love is peeviſh oft and wild,
And, while here and there it runs,
Knows not what it ſeeks or ſhuns;
For, alas! 'tis but a child——
Love is nothing but a child.

COLIN *repeats the burden.*

Love is peeviſh oft and wild, &c.

(*Looking at the ballad.*)
That is not the end, ſome other couplets ſee.

COLINET, *eagerly.*

Ay, come, I'll ſing them; Colin, give it me.

II.

Here doth love, and only here,
In ſimplicity appear;
While in borrowed charms array'd
It is in towns and courts diſplay'd.

Love is peeviſh oft and wild, &c.

(*This verſe repeated at the end of each ſtanza.*)

CHORUS.

Love is nothing but a child.

COLIN.

III.

Often is the tender flame
Cheriſh'd in the faithful breaſt;
Oft coquetry muſt reclaim
Roving hearts, to make them bleſt.
Love is peeviſh oft and wild, &c.

CONJURER.

IV.

Love diſpoſes of mankind
As beſt ſuits its fickle mind,
Makes us often jealous grow,
And torments for being ſo.
Love is peeviſh oft and wild, &c.

COLIN.

V.

While from fair to fair we range,
Oft we ſuffer by the change.
And as oft th' inconſtant's priz'd,
While the conſtant is deſpis'd.
Love is peeviſh oft and wild, &c.

COLINET.

VI.

Subject to its ſtrange caprice,
Now we laugh and now we cry;
At our——At our——
(COLIN *aſſiſts her to read.*)
At our frowns it will decreaſe,

COLINET.

And even from our ſmiles will fly.

Together.

Together.

Love is peeviſh oft and wild;
And, while here and there it runs,
Knows not what it ſeeks and ſhuns:
For, alas! 'tis but a child,
Love is nothing but a child.

CHORUS.

Love is nothing but a child.

After a dance, Colinet *advances.*

COLINET.

Sure the object of my heart
Nought but pleaſure can impart;
While his ſmiles reward my ſong
Every day and all day long.

Life is like a joyous dream,
When our days are paſs'd in love,
Gliding like a winding ſtream
That through flow'ry meads doth rove.

Another dance.

COLINET.

Come, beneath the green-wood tree,
Chear up, nymphs, and dance away;
Join'd in mirth and jollity,
Shepherds, take your pipes and play.

With your lovers dance and ſing
Joyous catches o'er and o'er,
Hand in hand make up the ring,
Nor alone e'er wander more.

CHORUS.

Come, beneath the green-wood tree, &c.

COLINET.

Among the fine folks of the city and court,
Who ſo bleſt in their love, or ſo gay in their ſport?
While ſtrangers to art,
We ſpeak from the heart,
They never can be
So happy as we: ſport.
And though ſimple our muſic, much better our ſport.
Than the concerts afford of the city or court.

CHORUS *of Laſſes.*

Come, beneath the green-wood tree, &c.

ON THEATRICAL IMITATION.

AN ESSAY,

Compoſed from the

DIALOGUES of PLATO.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following little piece is a kind of extract of thoſe paſſages in which Plato treats of Theatrical Imitation. I have done little more than barely collect them, and join them together in form of a connected diſcourſe, inſtead of that of dialogue in which they were firſt written. I was induced to this undertaking, on account of the letter I wrote to Mr d'Alembert on the ſubject of theatrical entertainments *; but as I could not conveniently interweave it in that work, I laid it aſide to be made uſe of elſewhere, or to be totally ſuppreſſed.

Since that time, it being got out of my hands, I found it included, I know not by what means, in a bargain with which I had nothing to do. The manuſcript was returned me, but the bookſeller claimed it as a fair purchaſe, and I had no mind to expoſe the perſon who had furniſhed him with it. Thus hath this triſle found its way to the preſs.

* Inſerted in this Volume.

On THEATRICAL IMITATION.

THE more I reflect on the inſtitution of our imaginary Republic, the more it appears to me, that we have laid down ſuch laws as are uſeful, and peculiary adapted to the nature of man. I conceive, in particular, that it was very neceſſary to lay a reſtraint, as we have done, on the licentiouſneſs of the poets, and to forbid them practiſing all ſuch parts of their art as relate to imitation.

We will reſume, if you pleaſe, this topic; as we have already examined all the more important ſubjects. And, in the hope that you will not betray me to thoſe dangerous enemies, I will confeſs to you that I look upon all dramatic writers as corrupters of the people; who, ſuffering themſelves to be amuſed by their imagery, are not capable of contemplating it in a true point of view, nor of beſtowing the neceſſary corrections which their fables require. Whatever reſpect I may have for Homer, their model and firſt maſter, I do not think I owe more to him than to truth; and to begin by being certain of the latter, I ſhall enter immediately on an inquiry into the nature of imitation.

In order to imitate a thing, it is requiſite to have an idea of it. This idea is abſtracted, abſolute, ſingle, and independent of the number of copies which may exiſt in nature of the ſame thing. This idea is always prior to its execution: for the architect who builds a palace, has the idea of a palace before he begins to build. He does not form the model, he only copies it, and this model muſt previouſly exiſt in his mind.

Con-

Confined, by the nature of his art, to this ſole object, this artiſt can only build his own palace, or other palaces like it: but there are many other artiſts more univerſal, who can imitate every thing that is in the power of workmen to do, every thing that is produced in nature, or that is viſible in the heavens, on the earth, in hell, or among the Gods themſelves. You will readily comprehend that theſe marvellous artiſts are painters; and that the moſt ignorant of men may do as much with the help of a common looking-glaſs. You will tell me that the painter doth not form the things themſelves, but only the images of them: juſt as much as the workman who really conſtructs them, ſince he copies a model which exiſted before them.

I ſee here three palaces very diſtinct. Firſt, the model, or original idea which exiſts in the mind of the architect, in nature, or at leaſt in its Author, together with all poſſible ideas, of which he is the ſource. Secondly, the palace of the architect, which is the image of that model; and laſtly, the palace of the painter, which is the image of that of the architect. Thus God, the architect, and the painter, are reſpectively the authors of theſe three ſeveral palaces. The firſt palace is the original idea, exiſting by itſelf; the ſecond is the image of it; the third is the image of the image, or what we properly call imitation. Hence it follows, that imitation does not, as is generally conceived, hold the ſecond rank, but the third, in the order of beings; and that, as no image is exact and perfect, the imitation is always in a degree farther from truth than is imagined.

The architect may conſtruct many palaces on the

the ſame model, as the painter may draw many pictures of the ſame palace; but with regard to the type or original model, it is perfectly ſingular: for if it be ſuppoſed that there may be two exactly alike, they would be no longer originals: they may indeed have one original model common to both, and this only would be the true one. Now what is here ſaid of painting, is equally applicable to theatrical imitation: but before we proceed to its application, let us examine more particularly into the imitations of the painter.

This artiſt is not only confined in his pictures ſolely to the imitation of the images of things, that is, the viſible productions of nature, and the works of other artiſts; but he does not even attempt to give the real figure of the object, but only its appearance. He paints it ſuch as it appears to be, and not ſuch as it is. He deſcribes it only in one point of view; and, making choice of this point at pleaſure, he repreſents the ſame object, according to his fancy, either agreeable or diſagreeable to the eye of the ſpectators. Thus they never can judge of the thing imitated by the thing itſelf, but are obliged to judge from a certain appearance aſſumed at the pleaſure of the imitator. Frequently, indeed, they judge only from habit, and caprice itſelf extends even to the art of imitation *.

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* Experience teaches us, that fine harmony does not pleaſe an ear unprepared for it; and that it is habit only which renders conſonances agreeable, and enables us to diſtinguiſh them from intervals the moſt diſcordant. As to the ſimplicity of thoſe relations on which it is pretended the pleaſure of harmony is founded; I have ſhewn, in the Encyclopedie, under the word *Conſonance* that, ſuch principle is not to be maintained; and I think it eaſy to prove, that all our harmony is a barbarous

The art of repreſenting objects, and that of conveying the knowledge of what they are in reality, are quite different. The firſt gives us pleaſure, without inſtruction; the ſecond, inſtructs, but does not pleaſe. The artiſt, who draws the deſign, and takes the dimenſions with nicety, preſents nothing very agreeable to the eye; his work therefore is never examined, but by perſons of ſkill. But he that draws in perſpective, pleaſes the ignorant, becauſe he does not teach them what the thing is, but only gives them the reſemblance of what they were before acquainted with. Beſides, menſuration ſhews us the magnitude of objects only by degrees, and it is ſome time before we arive at a true knowledge of their real dimenſions; but the repreſentation gives the whole at once, which,

barous and gothic invention, which is become, by length of time, an imitative art. A certain ſtudious magiſtrate of my acquaintance, who, inſtead of ſpending his leiſure hours at concerts, amuſes himſelf with inveſtigating the theory of muſic, has diſcovered, that the relation of a fifth is not as three to two, except by approximation; but that this relation is, ſtrictly ſpeaking, incommenſurable. Nobody, at leaſt, can deny that it may be ſo on our harpſichords properly tuned: yet this would not prevent thoſe fifths appearing agreeable. Now, where, in ſuch a caſe, is that ſimplicity of relation, which ſhould make them ſo? We do not even know whether our whole ſyſtem of muſic is not founded on mere convention: we know not if its principles are not altogether arbitrary; nor whether, if another ſyſtem were ſubſtituted in its place, it might not in time become habitual, and give us equal pleaſure. By a very natural analogy, theſe reflections may excite others on the ſubject of painting, relative to the tone of the picture, the accords of its colouring, and on certain parts of its deſign, in which there may be ſomething more arbitrary than is imagined, and in which the art of imitation itſelf may be limited by rules merely conventional. Why, for inſtance, do not the painters undertake new imitations, ſuch as have nothing againſt them but their novelty, and appear in every other reſpect peculiar to their art?

which being taken for the effect of greater genius, is more pleaſing to the ſenſe, as it is more flattering to our vanity.

The figures produced by the painter's art, which have in themſelves no ſolidity, could never appear to us under that form, but by means of certain lights and ſhades, which make us take the repreſentation for the thing itſelf. If there were any mixture of truth in thoſe imitations, he muſt of neceſſity know the objects he imitates; he ſhould underſtand natural philoſophy and mechanics, before he could be a painter: but, on the contrary, the extent of his art has no foundation but his ignorance; and he is capable of repreſenting every thing, becauſe it is not neceſſary he ſhould know any thing. When he preſents us with a philoſopher at his meditations, an aſtronomer obſerving the ſtars, a geometrician drawing figures, a turner at his lathe, can he alſo turn, meditate, calculate, or make obſervations on the planets? No, he can only paint thoſe who can, in their proper attitudes.

Without the capacity of accounting for what he repreſents on his canvas, he doubly abuſes us by his imitations; either by giving us an uncertain and deceitful appearance, the error of which is not to be diſtinguiſhed either by himſelf or others; or by uſing falſe meaſures, to produce that appearance; that is, by changing all the true dimenſions, and adapting them to the laws of perſpective; ſo that, if the alteration be not perceived by the ſpectator, whoſe ſenſe is confined to ſeeing the picture juſt as it is, he will either be deceived with regard to the conformity of what is repreſented, or will

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detect the fallacy. Yet the illuſion ſhall be ſuch as will impoſe on the young or ignorant: they will believe that they ſee objects, which the painter himſelf knew nothing of; and artiſts employed in works, to which he was an entire ſtranger.

Let us learn, from this example, to diſtruſt thoſe univerſal genuiſes, thoſe jacks-of-all trades, who know every thing, diſpute on all ſubjects, and ſeem to unite in themſelves the different talents of mankind.

If any body tells us of ſuch a wonderful perſon, let us aſſure him, that he is cheated by the legerdemain of a mountebank, and that all the knowledge of that great philoſopher is founded in the ignorance of his admirers, who cannot diſtinguiſh the error from the truth, nor the imitation from the reality.

This leads us to the conſideration of the tragic authors, and of Homer their chief *. Many people aſſure us, that a tragic poet ſhould know every thing; that he ought thoroughly to underſtand the virtues and vices, politics and morals, laws both human and divine; and that he ſhould be acquainted ſcientifically with all he treats of, or he will never riſe to perfection. Let us examine now, whether thoſe, who have carried poetry to that high pitch, have not ſuffered themſelves to be impoſed on by the imitative art, common to poets: whether their admiration of theſe immortal works has not blinded them ſo much, as not to perceive their diſtance from the truth;

* It was commonly thought by the ancients, that all their tragic authors were but imitators of Homer. One of them ſaid of the Tragedies of Euripides, "They are the leavings of Homer's banquet, brought away by ſome of the gueſts."

truth; as not to know that colours without conſiſtence are mere empty ſhadows; and that to draw ſuch images, nothing is leſs requiſite than the knowledge of truth: or rather, whether any real utility can be found in all theſe; and if poets are maſters, in fact, of that variety of things which the vulgar imagine they deſcribe ſo well.

Tell me now, my friends; if a man might have his choice, do you think he would prefer the picture of his miſtreſs, to the original? If an artiſt could make the thing he imitates, as well as the repreſentation of it, in matters of value, which would he chuſe? and would he content himſelf with the picture of an houſe when he was capable of building one? If, therefore, the tragic poet knew all thoſe things he pretends to deſcribe, if he poſſeſſed the qualities he paints, if he was able to do himſelf all he aſcribes to his characters, would he not exerciſe the ſame talents? practiſe the ſame virtues? Would he not raiſe monuments to his own glory, inſtead of ſpending his time in contributing to that of others? And would he not chuſe to do praiſe-worthy actions himſelf, rather than be confined to the celebration of them in others? The merit would undoubtedly be different; and there can be no reaſon why, being able to do more, he ſhould be ſatisfied with leſs.

But what think you of him who would teach us what he was never himſelf capable of learning? Who would not laugh to ſee a crowd of fools go to admire a raſh young fellow of twenty, turning into jeſt all the refinements of policy, and the receſſes of the human heart, to whom the moſt ignorant among them would not truſt

truſt the conduct of the ſmalleſt affair? We have now done with arts and talents.

When Homer ſays ſo much of the ſkill of Machaon, we never aſk what was his own knowledge of the ſame ſcience. We do not concern ourſelves with inquiring what diſorders he cured, what pupils he brought up, what fine works of engraving or ſculpture he finiſhed, what tradeſmen he formed, or what monuments he has left of induſtry. We permit him to inſtruct us, without knowing how far he is capable. But when he treats of war, government, laws and ſciences, that require the longeſt ſtudy, and contribute moſt to the good of mankind, let us then dare to interrupt him for a moment, and ſay, O divine Homer! we admire your inſtructions, and we only defer following them till we find how you practiſed them yourſelf: if you are really the perſon you have taken ſuch pains to appear, if your imitations hold the ſecond and not the third rank after the truth, let us ſee, in you, the counter-part of what you have drawn in your works; ſhew us the great captain, and the wiſe legiſlator, whoſe pictures you have ſo boldly painted.

Greece and the whole world acknowledge the benefits received from men who poſſeſſed thoſe ſublime arts whoſe precepts coſt you ſo little—Lycurgus gave laws to Sparta, Charondas to Italy and Sicily, Minos to Crete, Solon to us. If the queſtion relate to ſocial duties, to good œconomy, to the conduct of a family or that of a citizen in all conditions of life, Thales the Mileſian, and Anacharſis the Scythian, have given both the precept and example. Are we to inſtruct others in the ſame duties, and in-

ſtitute ſages and philoſophers to practiſe what they teach? thus did Zoroaſter among the Magi, Pythagoras to his diſciples, and Lycurgus to his fellow-citizens. But if it be true, Homer, that your excellence has been ſo various; if it be true, that you could inſtruct men, ſo as to render them at one wiſer and better; if it be true, that you have joined knowledge and underſtanding, to poetical imitation; ſhew us the labours that prove your abilities, the ſtates you have inſtructed, the virtues that do you honour, the ſcholars you have educated, the battles you have gained, the riches you have acquired. Why have you not procured crowds of friends? Why were not you admired and beloved by the whole world? How is it poſſible that you could have no follower but Cleophilus? Still you ſhew your ingratitude. What! a Protagoras of Abdera, a Prodicus of Chios, without quitting their private life, drew multitudes of their cotemporaries about them, perſuaded them to learn of them only the art of governing their country, their family, and themſelves; and yet theſe wonderful men, an Heſiod, an Homer, who had univerſal knowledge, who could inſtruct all perſons of their time, neglected that duty, to go rambling and begging through the world, chanting their verſes from town to town, like idle vagabonds or impertinent ballad-ſingers? In theſe rude ages, when the weight of ignorance began to be felt, when the greedineſs of knowledge, and the need that required it, joined to render every man uſeful and reſpected who had a little more learning than the reſt;—if theſe perſons were as wiſe as they ſeemed to be, if they were poſſeſſed of thoſe qualities they have

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ſo ſplendidly ſet forth in others, they would have paſſed for ſupernatural, they would have been ſought after by all: every one would have ſtriven to attach them, to poſſeſs them entirely, to keep them at their houſes; and thoſe who were not ſo ſucceſsful as to retain them, would rather have followed them all over the world, than loſe ſo good an opportunity of becoming ſuch heroes, as they had admired in the deſcriptions of theſe men *.

We muſt agree, therefore, that all the poets, beginning with Homer, do not repreſent to us, in the pictures they have drawn, perfect models of the virtues, talents, or qualities of the ſoul, or any other objects of the ſenſes or underſtanding which they had not in themſelves; but only the images of thoſe objects, drawn from objects foreign to them; and that they are not a jot nearer to truth when they give us the features of an hero or a general, than a painter who, drawing a geometrician or an artificer, troubles not himſelf about the art he is a ſtranger to, but only minds the colours and figures of the pieces. In like manner, names and words enchant thoſe who, having an ear for rhime and harmony, ſuffer themſelves to be charmed by the poet's bewitching art, and are ſeduced by the attraction of pleaſure; ſo as to take the images of objects, which neither they

* Plato would not ſay that a man of ſenſe, and converſant in lucrative buſineſs, cannot make a fortune by dealing in poetry or by other means. But there is a wide difference between growing rich, and illuſtrious; from the talent of poetry, and becoming ſo by ſuch talents as the poet pretends to teach. It is true, we may inſtance Tirtæus; but he drew himſelf out with honour, by being rather conſidered as an orator than a poet.

or their authors know any thing of, for the objects themſelves; and are afraid of being undeceived, in an error that flatters them, whether in covering their ignorance, or in the agreeable ſenſations that accompany that error.

In effect, take from the moſt beautiful of theſe poetic draughts, the charm of numbers, and other embelliſhments; ſtrip it of the colouring of poetry and ſtyle, and leave nothing but the plan; you ſhall ſcarce be able to know it again: And even if it can be known, it will be no more pleaſing, like thoſe children, rather pretty than handſome, who, once paſt the flower of their youth, loſe all their charms without changing a feature. Not only the imitator or author of a repreſentation knows nothing more than the appearance of what he imitates, but even the true knowledge of the thing itſelf is concealed from him that made it.

I ſee, in a picture, horſes yoked to the chariot of Hector; theſe horſes have harneſſes, bits, reins; the gold-ſmith, the black-ſmith and ſadler, have made all theſe; the painter hath repreſented them. But neither the workman who made them, nor the painter who deſigned them, know what they ought to be: it is the gentleman that is to determine their form by the uſe they are intended for; it is he only who is to judge whether they are good or bad, and who is to rectify their faults. So, in every thing that can be made, three things are to be conſidered as objects of practice: The uſe, the make, and the imitation. The two laſt evidently depend on the firſt; and there is nothing in nature that can admit of imitation, to which the ſame diſtinctions are not applicable. If the utility,

utility, the goodneſs, the beauty, of an inſtrument, of an animal, of an action, has a reference to the uſe it is deſigned for; if it belongs only to him that gives it to be made, to judge if it be executed according to his plan; ſo far is the imitator from being capable of knowing the qualities of the things he imitates, that the deciſion is not even to come from the original maker.

The imitator follows the workman; the workman follows the artiſt, who formed the deſign; and it is he only that can equally value the work and the imitation. This is a confirmation that the repreſentations of the poet and painter have but the third place after the architype or the truth.

But the poet who has no judge but the ignorant whom he ſeeks to pleaſe, will he not flatter them? Will he not diſfigure the objects he offers them?—He will imitate what appears fine to the vulgar, without troubling himſelf whether it be ſo in reality. If he draws an image of valour, ſhall he be judged by Achilles? If he ſhews us craft, will he be governed by the opinion of Ulyſſes? Quite the reverſe: Achilles and Ulyſſes are his characters; Therſites and Dolon, his ſpectators.

You will, perhaps, object to my argument, and alledge, that the philoſopher in this point is as deficient as the poet with reſpect to the arts about which he treats, and that the one is as free with his ideas as the other is with his images. I admit this: but the philoſopher does not ſet out on the principle of abſolutely knowing the truth; he inveſtigates, he examines, and ſearches for it in its retirements; he enlarges our views, and even his miſtakes contribute

to inſtruct us; he propoſes doubts as doubts, conjectures as conjectures, and aſſirms nothing of which he is not certain. In his reaſoning, he refers all to our opinion; and even the imitating poet preſumes to judge. When he furniſhes us with images, they are conformable to truth, and he is under a neceſſity of knowing how far he can rely on the certainty of his own art. He advances nothing, but with a deſign of arriving at the truth of his propoſition. The poet is the painter who draws the perſpective, the philoſopher is the architect who elevates the plan: the one ſcarce thinks it worth while to view the object he intends repreſenting; the other meaſures exactly, before he lays down the proportions of his edifice.

But that we may not be abuſed by analytical impoſition, let us examine what faculty of the ſoul has a conformity to theſe imitations of the poet, and then conſider from whence proceed the deceptions of the painter.

If we view the ſame objects at different diſtances, we ſhall imagine them to differ in magnitude, their forms are not ſo diſtinguiſhable, nor their colours of ſo ſtrong a tint. If in water, they alter their ſhape; that which is ſtraight appearing crooked, and ſeeming to undulate with the medium through which it is ſeen. By means of a convex or concave glaſs, the ſimilitude is entirely changed. By the mixture of light and ſhade, a flat ſurface appears either prominent or hollow as the painter thinks proper. His pencil cuts as deep as the ſculptor's chiſſel; and in the elevations traced on the canvas, our ſenſe of feeling is ſo ſtrongly contradicted by that of the ſight, as to leave a doubt which

which of the two we ſhould believe. All erroneous judgments are certainly made through precipitation; and it is owing to that weakneſs of the human underſtanding, always inclinable to determine without knowing the nature of things, that our ſenſes are cheated by the illuſions of magic, raiſed by the deceitful operations of optics and mechanics. We infer merely from appearances; and reaſon, from what we know, of that which we do not know; our falſe concluſions hence producing numberleſs extravagant chimeras.

But what are our remedies for theſe deceptions of our ſenſes? Analytical inveſtigation, the art of curbing our imagination, the uſe of weights, meaſures, and arithmetic, are the antidotes againſt the faſcination of the ſenſes. We ſhould, by theſe helps, be capable of determining what was great or ſmall, round or ſquare, pellucid or denſe; not by their appearance, but by number, weight, and meaſure.

The compariſon, the judgment we form of the proportions which bodies bear one to another by theſe different impreſſions, is undoubtedly the province of the reaſoning faculty; and that judgment is often at variance with the partiality our ſenſes have in favour of external ſigns.

Now we have before obſerved, that it cannot be one and the ſame faculty of the ſoul which forms contrary judgments of the ſame things, when conſidered under the ſame relations to each other. It is therefore not reaſon, the moſt excellent, but a different and inferior faculty, that is this dupe to appearances, and ſo fondly careſſes imitation.

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This is what I before meant in saying that painting, and the imitative art in general, exercises its operations far from the truth of things; as it is the object of that part of the soul which is void of reason and discretion, and it is incapable in itself of knowing truth from falsehood *.

Thus the art of imitation, base in its nature, and by its alliance with that low faculty of the soul by which it acts, is still mean in its productions, at least with regard to that material sense by which we judge of the labours of the painter. Let us now consider the same art immediately applied to the internal sense or understanding by the imitations of the poet.

The poetical landscape represents men as acting either voluntarily or by constraint, rating their performances as good or evil with respect to the consequences they imagine will be the issue, and suffering different emotions either of grief or joy. Now, for the reasons before assigned, it is impossible a man so circumstanced can ever be consistent with himself; and as the appearance or reality of sensible objects produce different opinions, he will estimate the objects of his actions differently, as they are near or remote, agreeable or repugnant to his passions; while his judgment is variable, as they raise a perpetual contradiction in his desires, his reason, his will, and all the powers of his soul.

The stage then represents mankind in general, even those proposed as worthy our imitation,

* We must not here take the word *part* in a strict sense, as if Plato had supposed the soul to be capable of division. By this is meant only the different operations of it, which are otherwise called *faculties*.

tion, as being influenced by paſſions quite repugnant to that ſtate of moderation and tranquillity neceſſary for their happineſs. Let a wiſe man, who has fortitude, loſe a ſon, a friend, a miſtreſs, or any object deareſt to him, we ſhall never ſee him given up to an unreaſonable or exceſſive grief; and though human weakneſs prevents him from ſurmounting his affliction entirely, yet his reſolution will prevail in a great meaſure againſt the firſt tranſports of his grief. A ſenſe of ſhame will conceal part of his pains in his own boſom: and, being kept in awe by the world, he will bluſh to ſay, or act, in its preſence, many things he might not ſcruple to do when alone. As he cannot be what he would, he at leaſt attempts to appear to others ſuch as he ought. Diſtreſs and paſſion are his tormentors, but reaſon and law preſcribe patience and reſignation; his will, even while he is agitated by theſe contrary emotions, conſtantly declaring in favour of the latter.

Reaſon, indeed, requires that we ſhould be patient in adverſity; that we ſhould not add to its weight by fruitleſs complaints; that ſublunary objects ſhould not be regarded above their juſt value; that we ſhould not waſte, in lamenting our misfortunes, that aſſiſtance which nature has furniſhed for ſoftening their rigour; and laſtly, that we ſhould ſometimes reflect on the impoſſibility of preventing what muſt happen, and to know ourſelves well enough to judge whether the event be a good or an evil.

It is thus a wiſe and moderate man will behave, when attacked by misfortune: he will try to make an advantage of his very calamities, as a prudent gameſter endeavours to apply an unlucky

lucky hit to his own benefit; and, inſtead of whining like a child who falls againſt a ſtone and weeps over it, he can bear, when neceſſary, the probe that ſearches his wound, and will even loſe his blood in order to eſtabliſh his health.

It muſt therefore be allowed, that conſtancy and reſolution in our afflictions are the effect of reaſon; and that tears, lamentation, and deſpair, proceed from a faculty of the ſoul quite oppoſite to the other, weaker, leſs ſpirited, and much inferior in dignity.

Now it is from this puſillanimous and ſenſible part, that all the affecting imitations we ſee repreſented in the theatre are derived. The prudent man, always conſiſtent with himſelf, is not ſo eaſily imitated; and if he were, the repreſentation would be wanting in that agreeable variety which conſtitutes its value with the vulgar. An image would be little intereſting, that is ſo unlike themſelves, and in which they could perceive neither their manners nor paſſions. The human heart never aſſimilates the objects to which it is an abſolute ſtranger. So the poet, who knows the way to ſucceſs, in aiming to pleaſe the taſte of the vulgar, takes care never to preſent them with the ſublime image of an heart replete with fortitude, and ſo far maſter of itſelf as to liſten only to the voice of wiſdom: but he raviſhes his audience by characters made up of inconſiſtencies and contradictions; who make the theatre reſound with their exclamations; who compel us to pity them, even whilſt they do no more than their duty, and make us think what a terrible thing virtue is that renders its friends ſo miſerable.

It

It is by ſuch arts, with ſome eaſy diverſities of imitation, the poet flatters and affects his audience, and plays with their paſſions at pleaſure. The cuſtom of ſeeing thoſe perſons, whom the poet has brought into our eſteem, given up to to the rage and government of their paſſions, warps our judgments with reſpect to what is praiſe-worthy, ſo that we accuſtom ourſelves to honour weakneſs under the name of ſenſibility; and to treat thoſe, as brutes, and void of ſentiment, who prefer the ſeverity of duty to the indulgence of their natural affections. On the contrary, we eſteem thoſe as good-natured, who, being ſtrongly affected with any thing, are the ſport of every wind that blows; who weep, like ſilly women, for the loſs of what was dear to them; who become unjuſt, through a miſ-applied friendſhip, in order to ſerve thoſe they love; who know no rule but the blind dictates of their partiality; who, always praiſed by that ſex to whom they are ſlaves, and whom only they imitate, have no virtues but their paſſions, nor merit but their weakneſſes. So that equanimity, fortitude, perſeverance, the love of juſtice, and the force of reaſon, become, inſenſibly, odious qualities, and even deteſtable vices.

Honour is beſtowed on men who only deſerve our contempt, and the ſubverſion of all juſt opinions is the never-failing effect of leſſons taught at the theatre.

It is with reaſon, therefore, we have blamed the imitations of the poet, and that we place him on the ſame rank with the painter; whether on account of their being equally removed from truth; or becauſe that both the one and the other,

ther, flattering the weak part of the ſoul, and neglecting to pleaſe the rational, turn the order of our faculties upſide down, and make the better part of us ſubſervient to the worſt. Even as that perſon in the commonwealth, who ſhould bring good ſubjects into a ſtate of ſubjection to the bad, and place rebels in the ſeats of the magiſtrates, would be a traitor to his country, and an enemy to the ſtate; ſo the poet by his imitations brings diſſentions and death into the republic of the ſoul, by exciting and nouriſhing the baſeſt of the faculties at the expence of the more noble; by waſting all his ſtrength on ſubjects the leaſt worthy his regard; confounding, by vain reſemblances, the beauty of truth, with the falſe attraction that is pleaſing to the populace, and throwing down the barriers between mimic ſplendour and real magnificence.

Where ſhall we find thoſe daring ſpirits that would venture to oppoſe the care the poet takes to corrupt or diſcourage them? When in Homer, or ſome other tragic writer, we ſee an hero, loaded with affliction, lamenting and beating his breaſt; an Achilles, the ſon of a goddeſs, ſometimes ſtretched on the ground, and throwing handfuls of burning ſand on his head; ſometimes running like a demoniac along the ſhore, and mingling the moſt ſavage howlings with the hoarſe murmur of the waves; a Priam, illuſtrious for his dignity, venerable for his age and for the merit of his numerous offſpring, rolling himſelf on the ground, and polluting his ſilver locks in the mire, filling the air with curſes, and arraigning the juſtice of the gods: who could be inſenſible to his complaints? We ſhould take a pleaſure in ſharing his

his afflictions. Who does not find correſponding ſentiments raiſed in his own mind? Who does not ſeriouſly applaud the author, and celebrate his art for drawing ſuch maſter-ſtrokes? And yet, when any domeſtic or real misfortune affects us, we pride ourſelves in bearing it with moderation, and not ſuffering our tears to flow. We then regard the courage we have ſhewed as a manly virtue, and ſhould think ourſelves ſpiritleſs as women did we weep and groan like the heroes repreſented on the ſtage, and whoſe paſſions claimed ſo much our admiration and pity. Are not thoſe mighty uſeful entertainments, where the examples we moſt applaud are ſuch as we would bluſh to imitate? and where the follies we are ſo much intereſted in, demand all our care, in order to ſhun them in our private calamities?

Thus the moſt noble faculty of the ſoul, by loſing the empire of itſelf, bends with eaſe to the tyranny of the paſſions. It no longer reſtrains our cries and tears: it gives us up to the weakneſs of being afflicted for objects quite ſtrange to us; and under the pretext of generous pity for chimerical misfortunes, far from letting us deſpiſe ourſelves for our exceſſive grief, far from preventing our applauſe of what has diſhonoured us, it ſubjects us to the vileſt abaſements, through the falſe tenderneſs with which we are inſpired. It ſuffers our vain ſelf-admiration of our own generoſity in pitying the diſtreſſes of others; this is a pleaſure we believe to have gained without weakneſs, and which we indulge without remorſe.

But if we thus ſubject ourſelves to the afflictions of others, how ſhall we ſupport our own?

how courageouſly reſiſt real evils, when we are ſo much ſoftened by imaginary ones? What! ſhall we be the only perſons who have no command of our own ſenſibility? Who is there that can deny thoſe ſentiments of pity to himſelf, who ſo liberally beſtows them on ſtrangers? I may ſay as much with regard to comedy; the indecent laughter it raiſes; the habit of ridiculing every thing, even ſubjects the moſt ſerious; and the pernicious effect it has on our minds, by turning the moſt reſpectable characters into theatrical buffoons. The ſame may be ſaid of love, anger, and the reſt of the paſſions, which being rendered every day more familiar in jeſt, we loſe the power of reſiſting them when they attack us in earneſt. In ſhort, from what point ſoever we view the theatre and its imitations, we conſtantly ſee, that, by animating the diſpoſitions it ought to ſuppreſs, it gives us a maſter that ſhould be our ſubject. Far from making us wiſer or happier, it renders us more miſerable and vicious, and makes us pay dearly for the pains it takes to flatter and pleaſe us.

When therefore, friend Glaucus, you meet with any of the enthuſiaſtic admirers of Homer; when they tell you, that he was the inſtructor of Greece, and maſter of all the arts; that the government of kingdoms, and the conduct of ſocial life, the education of mankind, and all civil regulations, are taught in his writings; honour their zeal; love and eſteem them, as men of excellent endowments; admire, with them, the wondrous talents of ſo great a genius; agree with them that Homer is a perfect poet, and the chief of tragic authors: but ſtill remember, that hymns in honour of the gods, and the praiſes of

great men, are the only ſpecies of poetry that ſhould be admitted into the republic of learning; and that if we once allow the imitative muſe, which charms and deceives us by the ſweetneſs of her voice, the actions of men will no longer have either laws, or the beautiful and good, for their object; but pleaſure and tenderneſs will uſurp their places; inflamed paſſions will change ſituation with reaſon; the citizens will be no more virtuous and juſt, always obedient to duty and equity, but poor weak creatures, ready to do either good or evil indifferently as their inclinations lead them. Laſtly, forget not, that in baniſhing from our republic all ſpecies of the drama, we do not purſue a rude and barbarous prepoſſeſſion, or deſpiſe the beauties of the art; but prefer thoſe immortal charms, which are the reſult of the harmony of the ſoul, and the good diſpoſition of the faculties.

Let us go a little further.—In order to guard ourſelves againſt partiality, and to avoid that old diſagreement that ſtill reigns among poets and philoſophers, let us leave poetry in poſſeſſion of all it can alledge in its defence, nor deprive ourſelves of the innocent pleaſures it procures us.

Let us pay that deference to truth, as to reſpect even the reſemblance of it, and leave it at liberty to make itſelf underſtood in all that can add to its reputation. Whilſt we impoſe ſilence on the poets, let us permit their friends to defend them, and to ſhew us, that the art we condemn is ſomething more than pleaſing, and is of uſe to the citizens and commonwealth. Let us hear their arguments without prejudice; and let us agree that we are great gainers, if they prove we

we may, without hazard, give up ourſelves to ſuch ſweet impreſſions: Otherwiſe, my dear friend, as a wiſe man, who is enamoured of a miſtreſs, ſeeing her virtue on the point of failing, breaks, though with regret, ſuch pleaſing fetters, and ſacrifices love to duty and reaſon; ſo, infatuated from our youth by the ſeducing attractions of poetry, and too ſenſible of its charms, yet we ſhall be thus able by the force of reaſon to defend ourſelves from its enchantments. Tho' we dare indulge ourſelves in ſomething we have an inclination for, yet we ſhould not venture at leaſt to put ourſelves in the way of the firſt object of our love. We may ſtill ſay, There is nothing ſerious or uſeful in the parade of the drama: in liſtening ſometimes to poetry, we ſhall guard againſt its abuſe, and we ſhall never allow it to diſturb order and liberty, neither in the ſpiritual republic of the ſoul, nor in that of civil ſociety. The alternative of becoming better or worſe is no light matter, and we cannot be too cautious in our choice.

It is a fine thing, I admit, to reſign ourſelves to the charms of that bewitching talent, and to acquire by it, riches, honours, power, and an high reputation; but power, renown, wealth, and pleaſure, diſappear, like ſhadows, before the glorious light of juſtice and virtue.

SYL-

SYLVIA's WALK*.

I.

WHAT pleaſing tranſports fill my heart!
How ſweet, in theſe delightful groves,
Our pains or pleaſures to impart,
To the fair object of our loves;
Where leafy ſhades, and cryſtal ſtreams,
Raiſe fancy in poetic dreams!

II.

Bleſt ſolitude, romantic bow'rs,
Where happy peace, and calm repoſe,
Gently beguile the lazy hours,
And eaſe the ſmart of mental woes!
Cruel remorſe ſhall end my days,
When thy ſoft charms no longer pleaſe.

III.

Be gone, vain hopes, and projects vain,
Far hence from this ſecure retreat;
No more my heart ſhall entertain
A wiſh ſo low, as to be great;
Your empty promiſe, long believ'd.
I'm now too wiſe to be deceiv'd.

IV.

Alas! vain man's a ſummer flow'r,
Born to be pluckt by Fate's decree:
Let him enjoy the preſent hour,
Not anxious of futurity;
But time improve, if he be wiſe,
Nor haſten what ſo ſwiftly flies.

V. 'Tis

* Written in a place ſo called.

V.

'Tis virtue and fair innocence,
Without foreknowledge can ſupply
A fund of wealth at ſmall expence,
Content, and bleſt tranquillity.
Contentment to the wiſe is giv'n,
Beſt bounty of indulgent heav'n!

VI.

Paſſions with baſe inſidious ſway,
(Source of our pleaſures and our pains)
Firſt reaſon's fortreſs do betray,—
Then load us with its galling chains.
From paſſion all our miſchiefs flow—
Its reign is anarchy, its fruit is wo.

VII.

Ill fate purſue the ſordid knave
Who ſees with joy the ſhining ſtore;
To want and penury a ſlave,
Not to enjoy, but heap up more.
Riches to ſuch a wretch are ſent,
To be his curſe and puniſhment.

VIII.

Shame on the fierce and haughty ſoul,
Whoſe odious inſolence of place,
Whoſe damn'd ambition, would controul
And keep in chains the human race,
Till one as inſolent and great,
Shall hurl him from his ſplendid ſeat!

IX.

Shame to the man, wherever found,
Whom no misfortune ever moves;
Who calmly views diſtreſs around,
And nought beſide his own dear perſon loves!
May he, when ſtript of all his pelf,
Find no one kinder to himſelf.

X. In

X.

In this as truth we may believe,
Some ſouls are to ſome crimes ally'd,
And ſuch impreſſions do receive
From paſſions that in them reſide;
But ſouls ally'd to good, we ſee,
From fouler crimes are always free.

XI.

But tender hearts, tho' good, are found
From virtue's ſtricter paths to ſtray,
When youthful pleaſures dance around,
And love points out the flow'ry way.
But theſe the ſofter paſſions move;—
All ruder ones are huſh'd by love.

XII.

Why ſhould thoſe paſſions be a crime,
Which by the ſofteſt impulſe move?
In ev'ry age, in every clime,
'Tis nature that inſpires with love.
Then can it be the will of fate,
That love ſhould e'er be turn'd to hate?

XIII.

Theſe charming leſſons learn'd with eaſe,
To practice can the young induce;
I that have loſt the pow'r to pleaſe,
Should be conſign'd to other uſe.
Morals I preach, which are a jeſt,
While love ſits brooding in the breaſt.

XIV.

Ah me! why thus the truant play,
Already paſt my flow'ry prime?
Why in the paths of pleaſure ſtray,
When blooming youth gives place to time?
Too ſoon, alas! ſhall hoary age
Drive theſe mock Cupids off the ſtage.

XV. To

XV.

To this ſucceeds ſevere diſguſt
Of all, but ſtern philoſophy;
Then the ſtrict rules of wiſdom muſt
Ariſe from hard neceſſity,
Which cenſure youth and pleaſure paſt,
When age forbids its joys to taſte.

XVI.

Tho' cloth'd with wiſdom's aweful mien,
Ev'n age is not from folly free;
The hoary ſaint is often ſeen
To trip in vice and vanity:
As veſſels by rude tempeſts toſt,
Juſt making of their port are loſt.

XVII.

Thus under wiſdom's form we cheat,
Nor can the prying world diſcloſe,
Ev'n nature fav'ring the deceit,
We on ourſelves ſo oft impoſe.
Tho' far remov'd from wiſdom's voice,
We call that wiſe which is our choice.

XVIII.

So in the bloom of hardy youth
Is vice by folly often led;
Error aſſumes the garb of truth,
And plants itſelf in t'other's ſtead.
The ſour fanatic cants and lies,
Then thinks himſelf both good and wiſe.

XIX.

Ah! could we find but one true ſage,
How different would his manners prove!
Agreeable to youth or age,
In friendly mirth and ſocial love,
His worſhip pure, his manners free—
O give me ſuch a friend as he.

ADVER-

ADVERTISEMENT

To an ANONYMOUS WRITER*.

Paris, Nov. 29. 1755.

I Received, the 26th of this month, an anonymous letter dated the 28th of October laſt, which, being wrong directed, had been at Geneva, and was returned poſt paid to Paris. To this letter was annexed a paper written in my defence, which I could not give to the Mercury, as the author deſired, for reaſons which he will be very ſenſible of if he has really that eſteem for me which he expreſſes. He may have that paper back again therefore, by addreſſing a billet to me in the ſame hand-writing: otherwiſe it will be ſuppreſſed.

The author ought not ſo readily to have believed, that the writer he refuted was a citizen of Geneva, although he aſſumed that character; for it is eaſy to date a letter from that country: but a perſon may boaſt this advantage, and yet affirm

* Two anonymous pieces were about this time addreſſed to Mr Rouſſeau; the one by means of the Mercury, and the other by the poſt. The firſt told him that, "As the face of "ſociety could not now be changed, the arts were become ne"ceſſary, and the inequality of conditions unavoidable: why "then ſhould the preſent eſtabliſhed order be diſturbed, by ex"citing in its members the ſpirit of diſguſt and independence? "——When ſuch a man as you writes for the uſe of others, "he ought to do it only for their amuſement or inſtruction. "Thus, if, inſtead of having thrown away your time in "writing two philoſophical diſſertations, you had compoſed "ſuch another opera as *Le Devin du village*, you would have "again charmed the hearts of all thoſe who might read it."

The ſubject of the other letter is ſufficiently intimated in Mr Rouſſeau's advertiſement.

affirm the contrary without knowing it. I have neither the vanity nor the ſatisfaction to believe that all my fellow-citizens think as I do: but I know the candour of their proceedings; if any of them had thought proper to attack me, they would have done it openly and boldly. They would reſpect me ſo much, even in oppoſing me; or at leaſt they would reſpect themſelves ſo much as to act towards me with that frankneſs and ſincerity with which I act to all the world. Add to this, that thoſe for whom that work * was written, to whom it was dedicated, and who honoured it with their approbation, never aſked me once about its utility. They did not object, like many others, "That, ſuppoſing what was advanced to be true, I ought not to have advanced it, as if the happineſs of ſociety were founded only on the errors of mankind." They ſaw there, I will venture to ſay, very cogent reaſons for reſpecting their own government, as well as the means of preſerving it. And while they found in it thoſe maxims which become every honeſt and virtuous citizen, they could not deſpiſe a treatiſe which breathes throughout a ſpirit of humanity, liberty, patriotiſm, and obedience to the laws.

As to the inhabitants of other countries, if they find nothing in the work that is entertaining or uſeful, I think they ſhould be rather aſked why they read it, than that I ſhould be aſked why it was written. A certain genius of Bourdeaux adviſes me gravely to lay aſide political inveſtigations, and to compoſe operas; becauſe he, undoubtedly a genius, is much better entertained

* The tract on the *Inequality among Mankind.*

tertained at the repreſentation of the *Devin du village* *, than by the peruſal of my *Diſcours ſur l'inegalite*. And in this he would doubtleſs be right, if it were true, that, in writing to the citizens of Geneva, I was obliged to find entertainment for the inhabitants of Bourdeaux.

Be this, however, as it may, in acknowledging my obligations to my defender, I beg of him to leave the field open to my adverſaries; feeling myſelf no little regret at the time I have formerly thrown away in anſwering them.

When our ſearch after truth degenerates into diſputes and perſonal quarrels, it does not heſitate to aſſume the weapons of falſehood; but let us beware of debaſing ourſelves in this manner. Whatever value we may juſtly ſet on ſcience, peace of mind is of ſtill much greater. I deſire no other defence for my writings, than reaſon and truth; nor for my perſon, than my conduct and morals: if theſe fail, nothing can ſupport me; and if they ſupport me, what have I to fear?

EXTRACT *of a* LETTER *to a* FRIEND, *on the Works of* M. RAMEAU.

I WOULD endeavour, firſt of all, to determine, as near as poſſible, the idea which an impartial and reaſonable man ought to have of the works of M. Rameau; for I regard the clamours of the cabals, for and againſt him, as nothing. As to my own part, I may poſſibly be miſtaken in my judgment, for want of knowledge; but, if

* The *Village Conjurer*.

if what I advance be not altogether reaſonable, it will certainly be impartial, which is often the moſt difficult.

There is one circumſtance attending the theoretical works of M. Rameau, very ſingular; which is, that they have gained a great reputation without having been read; and they will be ſtill leſs read for the future, ſince a certain philoſopher took the pains to write a ſummary of that author's doctrine. It is very certain, that this abridgment will annihilate the originals, nor will there be any reaſon to regret them while poſſeſſed of ſo good a ſubſtitute. His ſeveral performances include nothing either new or uſeful, except the principle of the fundamental baſs: but it is not a little affair to have given a principle, were it even merely arbitrary, to an art which ſeemed to be void of principles; and to have ſo facilitated the rules of it, that the ſtudy of compoſition, which was formerly the buſineſs of twenty years application, is at preſent only that of a few months.

The muſicians eagerly embraced the diſcovery of M. Rameau, while they affected to diſdain it. Their pupils multiplied with aſtoniſhing rapidity; on every ſide were ſeen petty compoſers juſt initiated into the ſcience; moſt of them deſtitute of talents, who ſet up for adepts at the expence of their maſter. Thus the very great and real ſervices which M. Rameau rendered to muſic, brought with them at the ſame time this inconvenience, that France was over-run with bad muſic and wretched muſicians; becauſe, every one conceiting he knew all the fineſſes of his art when he had juſt acquired the elements, all of them ſet about compoſing harmony, before

ſore their ear and experience had taught them to diſcern good harmony from bad.

With regard to the operas of Rameau, the public lie under this obligation to them, that they firſt raiſed the opera theatre above the ſtages of the Pont-neuf. He boldly broke through that petty circle of very petty muſic, in which our trifling muſicians conſtantly moved, after the death of the great Lully. So that, though one ſhould be unjuſt enough to deny Rameau the poſſeſſion of ſuperior talents, it cannot at leaſt be denied that he opened in a manner a new carreer for them, and thereby gave the muſicians who ſucceeded him an opportunity of diſplaying theirs with ſecurity; which was undoubtedly no eaſy enterpriſe. He felt the thorns, and his ſucceſſors gathered the roſes.

It appears to me, that he is accuſed too lightly of having never ſet any but bad words; beſides, to give any weight to this reproach, it ſhould be firſt ſhown that he had it in his power to chuſe better. Would it have been better then that he had ſet none at all? A more juſt reproach is, that he did not always underſtand the words he made uſe of; that he often miſtook or miſrepreſented the ſenſe of the poet, and was guilty of many inconſiſtencies. It was not his fault that he was employed on bad words; but it is to be doubted, whether he could have made the moſt of better. It is certain, that with regard to ſenſe and underſtanding, he was greatly inferior to Lully; to whom he was almoſt always ſuperior in point of expreſſion. M. Rameau would have no more been able to have compoſed the ſoliloquy of Roland, than Lully that of Dardanus.

It muſt be acknowledged, that M. Rameau poſſeſſed fine talents, great fire, a truly harmonical head, a great knowledge in all the parts of the art capable of producing effect; a great deal of art in adopting, improving, and embelliſhing the ideas of others, and of repeating his own: at the ſame time, he had little facility of inventing new; more capacity than fertility; more knowledge than genius, or at leaſt a genius overwhelmed by too much knowledge; but he had always force and elegance, and very often a beautiful modulation.

His recitative is leſs natural, but much more varied, than that of Lully; admirable in ſome few ſcenes, and almoſt always bad in all the reſt. But this is, perhaps, as much a defect in the nature of things as any fault of his; for it frequently happens, that his ſubjecting himſelf too ſervilely to declamation, occaſions his tranſitions to be harſh, and his modulation unmuſical. Had he had the power to invent the true recitative, and to have been able to beat it into the heads of the ſheepiſh animals about him, I conceive he might have excelled in it.

He is the firſt who compoſed ſymphonies and laboured accompanyments, and he made an ill uſe of them. Before his time, the orcheſtra of the opera reſembled a company of paralytics in the height of their paroxyſm. He hath, to be ſure, revived them a little. They aſſure us at preſent that they have execution; but, I ſay, for my own part, that theſe people never had either feeling or taſte. It is nothing for them to be merely all together, to play ſtrong or ſoftly, and exactly to accompany the actor. To ſtrengthen, ſoften, ſupport, ſink the ſounds, as taſte and

ex-

expreſſion require; to enter into the ſpirit of an accompaniment, to keep up and make the moſt of ſounds; ſuch is the art of all the orcheſtras in the world, excepting that of our opera.

Now, I ſay, That M. Rameau hath abuſed this orcheſtra, even ſuch as it is. He hath made his accompaniment ſo confuſed, ſo overloaded, ſo frequent, that the head can hardly bear to hear that continual noiſe of the ſeveral inſtruments during the execution of his operas; which would be heard with ſo much pleaſure if they did not ſtun the ears quite ſo much. Hence it is, that the orcheſtra, being conſtantly in play, never affects or ſtrikes us, and almoſt always loſes its effect. It is ſometimes neceſſary, after a ſcene of recitative, that an unexpected ſtroke of the bow ſhould alarm the moſt abſent auditor; and compel him to be attentive to the images which the author is going to repreſent, or to the ſentiments he would excite. But this is what an orcheſtra never will effect that are perpetually ſcraping.

Another reaſon againſt theſe too-laboured accompaniments, is, that they have a direct contrary effect to what they ought to have. Inſtead of fixing the attention of the ſpectator in the moſt agreeable manner, they deſtroy it by dividing it. Before any one can perſuade me that it is a fine thing to have three or four deſigns huddled one upon another, by three kinds of inſtruments, it is neceſſary to prove to me, that three or four actions are neceſſary in a comedy. All theſe fineſſes of art, theſe imitations, double deſigns, forced baſſes, counterfugues, are monſtrous deformities, the monuments of bad taſte,

which ought to be ſhut up in the cloiſters, as their laſt aſylum.

To return to M. Rameau, and finiſh this digreſſion; I think nobody has known better how to manage particular circumſtances, nobody has been better verſed in the arts of contraſt: but, at the ſame time, nobody has known leſs how to give his operas that unity which is ſo maſterly and ſo truly to be deſired; and he is, perhaps, the only man in the world who has been incapable of making a good work out of a number of fine parts excellently arranged.

——————————Et ungues
Exprimet, et molles imitabitur ære capillos;
Infelix operis ſumma quia ponere totum
Neſciet.

This, ſir, is what I think of the works of the celebrated M. Rameau, to whom the nation muſt pay deſervedly great honours. I know that this judgment will not ſatisfy either his partiſans or his enemies: for all I had in view was to give a juſt one; and I propoſe it to you, not as a rule for yours, but as an example of that ſincerity with which it is proper an honeſt man ſhould ſpeak of theſe great geniuſes he admires, and whom nevertheleſs he does not think to be without fault.

EXTRACT of a LETTER

FROM

Mr ROUSSEAU to a FRIEND.

Written from Montmorency the 5th of April 1749, in regard to Mr ROUSSEAU's Freedom of entry at the Opera; which was given him for his VILLAGE CONJURER; was taken from him, on account of his *Letter on the French Muſic*; and was offered to be returned to him again, after he had quitted Paris.

AFTER having deprived me of the freedom of the Opera-houſe when I reſided at Paris, to offer it me when I am no longer there, is to add raillery to inſult. Do not thoſe people very well know that I have neither the means nor intention to profit by their offer? Why the devil ſhould I go ſo far to hear their opera, when I have at my very gate all the rooks and ſcreech-owls of the foreſt of Montmorency?

They do not refuſe, Mr D—*—* ſays, to reſtore me the freedom of their houſe. I underſtand them very well. Yes, they will reſtore it to me to-day, in order to have the pleaſure of giving me a ſecond affront by taking it away again to-morrow. As no dependance is to be made upon the word and aſſurances of theſe people, who is to anſwer to me for them and their intentions? It muſt certainly be very agreeable to me to preſent myſelf at the door of the

opera, only in the expectation of having it a ſecond time ſhut againſt me. You will ſay, perhaps, They will, for the future, have no pretext. Pardon me, Sir, they will never want a pretext of ſome kind or other. For whenever it is neceſſary to admire the opera, I muſt be ſent about my buſineſs. Why did they not propoſe that admirable condition in their bargain? They ſhould not then have murdered my poor *Conjurer*. When they have a mind to pick a quarrel with me, is it poſſible they will want a pretence? Lying is a fertile and never-failing reſource. Have they not charged me with making a diſturbance in the theatre, and thence pretended that my excluſion was neceſſary for the preſervation of the public peace?

In the firſt place, they lie. I can call to witneſs the pit, and indeed the whole audience then preſent. I never amuſed myſelf in my life in clapping or hiſſing a parcel of buffoons; and I could neither laugh nor prattle at the French opera, for I never could have the patience to ſtay there. My ears were no ſooner ſaluted by their mournful pſalmody, than I immediately took refuge in the Corridors. No, if they could but have found me at fault in this particular, they would have taken ſufficient care I ſhould not repeat it. Every one knows how particularly I was pointed out and recommended to the ſentinels. A ſingle word or motion would have been ſignal enough for them to apprehend me; in the mean time, the moment I came into the pit, I was ſurrounded by gad-flies, who endeavoured to provoke me. I leave you to imagine if ſome prudence was not neceſſary to prevent their taking any hold of me. All their

efforts

efforts, however, were in vain; for I have long ſince ſaid to myſelf, "John-James, as you have undertaken the dangerous employ of defending the truth, be conſtantly attentive to yourſelf; ſubmit to all laws and rules; that when people are deſirous of ill-treating you, they may be ever in the wrong." Would to God, I may be able to obſerve this precept to the end of my life, as well as I have done hitherto!

Thus, my good friend, I ſpeak reſolutely, and fear nothing. I am ſenſible there is not a man upon earth who can juſtly do me harm; and with reſpect to injuſtice, it is what nobody in the world is ſecured from. I am, indeed, the moſt feeble of human beings; and every one may inſult me with impunity. I experience that this is well known, and the inſults of the directors of the opera reſemble, with regard to me, the aſs kicking the ſick lion. As nothing of all this depends on myſelf; what can I do in it? But it is my buſineſs to ſee that every one who does me harm, hath not juſtice on his ſide; and for this I will take upon me to anſwer.

In the firſt place, then, I ſay again, They lie; and, in the ſecond place, ſuppoſing they had not lied, they would have been in the wrong. For, whatever harm I might be able to ſay, write, or do, againſt them, they ought not to have deprived me of the freedom of their houſe; for ſince they were ſtill in poſſeſſion of my work, they ought to pay the price agreed on. What then ſhould they have done? Arreſt me; traduce me before the courts; proſecute me; hang, draw, quarter me, if I had deſerved it; any

any thing but deprive me of the freedom of the houſe. And by the way, if I were impriſoned or hanged, it is very certain I ſhould not go to make a diſturbance at the opera. But they ſay farther, "What harm have we done Mr Rouſſeau, in taking from him the freedom of our theatre, when he does not like our performances?" I anſwer, They have done me wrong, have committed violence, injuſtice, and inſult; all which are harm. What! becauſe my neighbour does not chuſe to employ his money, is that a reaſon why I ſhould go and cut his purſe?

In whatſoever light I conſider this thing, and to whatever rule of juſtice I apply it, I cannot help conceiving, that, if the cauſe were brought before any tribunal on earth, the directors of the opera would be immediately condemned to reſtore my piece, with reparation of damages and coſts of ſuit. But it is clear that I am in the wrong, becauſe I cannot obtain juſtice; and that they are in the right, becauſe they are more powerful than I am. I defy the whole world to alledge any thing farther in their favour.

I muſt now ſpeak to you of my bookſellers. To begin with Mr P——I am ignorant whether he is a gainer or loſer by me: every time I aſked him if my pieces ſold well, he as conſtantly anſwering, *Tolerably*; without my ever being able to get any thing farther out of him. For my firſt Diſcourſe he did not give me a ſingle penny, nor ever made me any kind of preſent except a few copies for my friends. I agreed with him for the engraving of the *Village Conjurer*, at five hundred livres; half to be paid in books, and the other half in money, which

which he laid himſelf under an obligation to pay me at ſeveral times, and in certain payments. He did not keep his word reſpecting any one, and I was long obliged to run after my two hundred and fifty livres.

With regard to my bookſeller in Holland, I have found him in every reſpect a careful, exact, and honeſt man. I aſked him twenty-five guineas for my *Diſcourſe on the Inequality of Mankind*; he gave me the ſum immediately, and beſides made a preſent of a gown for my governante. I aſked him thirty guineas for my *Letter to Mr d'Alembert*, and he gave me them immediately; but ſent no preſent, on that occaſion, either to me or my governante: indeed he ought not; but he gave me a pleaſure which I never received from Mr P——, in declaring ingenuouſly that he had reaſon to be ſatisfied with our connections.

This, my friend, is the true ſtate of the caſe. If any one informs you otherwiſe, their information is not true.

If thoſe, who accuſe me of wanting diſintereſtedneſs, mean that I cannot with pleaſure ſee myſelf deprived of the little I earn for my ſubſiſtence, they are in the right; and it is evident I ſhall never appear diſintereſted in their eyes, till I ſuffer myſelf to be ſtarved to death. If they mean that all kind of reſources are equally indifferent to me, and that provided I get money I trouble myſelf very little whence it comes; I conceive they are miſtaken. If I were leſs ſcrupulous about the means of acquiring money, it would be leſs painful to loſe it; and it is well known that no people are ſo prodigal as robbers. But when I am unjuſtly ſtripped of what belongs

longs to me, when the moderate produce of my labour is taken from me, the injury is such as is not easily repaired; and it is very hard to be denied the liberty of complaining. The good people of Paris have long since formed a John-James after their own imagination; and have liberally loaded him with presents, which the real John-James of Montmorency never had a sight of. Infirm and sick for three quarters of the year, it is necessary for me to earn, by the labour of the other quarter, as much as will provide subsistence for the whole. Those who get their bread by honest means, know the value of it, and will not be surprised that I cannot be very lavish of mine. Believe me, you will have too much to do, if you undertake to defend me in public. It is sufficient that you yourself are not absurd on my account, and that I still preserve your friendship and esteem.

I have at Paris, as well as elsewhere, such secret enemies as will never forget the injuries they have done me; for though the person offended may sometimes forgive, the offender never does. You should reflect how unequal the party is between us. They, dispersed throughout the world, can spread what reports of me they please; without my being capable of knowing them, or defending myself: And is it not well known, the absent are always to blame? Besides, I am so blunt and frank, as to break openly and immediately with such people as have deceived me.

In declaring aloud and plainly, that the person, who calls himself my friend, is not so, and that I am no longer his, I advertise the public to be cautious of what I may say against him.

As

As to my adverſaries, they are not ſo artleſs as this. The decorum with which they varniſh over their proceedings is really curious; while they gratify their malice at their eaſe, and wreak their vengeance in making a diſplay of their generoſity, their poinard is conveniently hid unthe cloak of friendſhip, and they are artful enough to cut one's throat while they pretend to pity one. "Alas, poor citizen! Yet, at the bottom, he is not a bad man; he has only a bad head, which conducts him as ill as if he had a bad heart." Thus ſome obſcure words are dropt, which are preſently picked up, commented on, and diſperſed, by our puny philoſophers; whilſt the poiſon is prepared in ſecret corners, which they undertake to diffuſe among the public.

One hath the greatneſs of mind to ſay a thouſan good things of me, after having taken meaſures to prevent any body's believing them. Another defends me from the evil of which I am accuſed, after having done every thing to put the charge out of doubt. And this is imputed to abilities? What would you have me do againſt it? Can I hear, in my retreat, the converſation which is held in polite circles? And if I did hear of it, can I go thither to diſprove it, to reveal the ſecrets of friendſhip even after it is extinct? No, my dear Nieps, one may repel the aſſaults of our enemies; but when one ſees, among the aſſaſſins, the poinard in the hand of a friend, nothing is to be done but to hide one's head, and avoid or ſuffer the blow.

BODLEIAN LIBRARY

AN

EPISTLE

TO

M. D'ALEMBERT,

Member of the French Academy, &c.

Concerning the Article GENEVA, in the ſeventh Volume of the *Encyclopedie*; and particularly on the Project of eſtabliſhing a Play-houſe in that City.

Dii meliora piis, erroremque hoſtibus illum.

PREFACE.

I Should be to blame if I took up my pen on the preſent occaſion without neceſſity. It can be neither advantageous nor agreeable for me to enter the liſts with Mr d'Alembert; whoſe perſon I reſpect, whoſe talents I admire, and whoſe writings I hold in eſteem. I am ſenſible of the handſome things he hath ſaid of my native country, and have even been particularly honoured by his encomiums; ſo that in every reſpect I am under obligations to him. Such obligations, however, will never be thought ſufficient to ſuperſede our moral duties, unleſs with thoſe whoſe morality conſiſts in mere appearances. Juſtice and truth are the firſt of theſe

theſe duties; humanity and patriotiſm the firſt of our affections. When perſonal conſiderations induce men to invert this order, they are criminal. Shall I be thought culpable, therefore, in diſcharging my duty? Let him anſwer me, who hath the ſervice of his country at heart, and hath a greater regard for his own duty, than the fear of diſpleaſing others.

As the Encyclopedie is not in every body's hands, I ſhall here tranſcribe the paſſage, from the article *Geneva* in that dictionary, which hath engaged me to write this epiſtle. It ſhould rather indeed have prevented me, if I aſpire to the honour of writing well; but I am bold enough to be ambitious of another kind of honour, in which I am under no apprehenſions of a rival.

On reading the paſſage in queſtion by itſelf, the reader will be ſurpriſed at the author's zeal and motives; but on peruſing the whole article from which it is ſelected, he will ſee, that the ſubject of a theatre, of which there is none at preſent at Geneva, though there may poſſibly be one hereafter, takes up an eighth part of what the writer hath advanced in the whole.

"Play-houſes are not tolerated at Geneva; not becauſe the citizens diſapprove theatrical entertainments in themſelves; but it is ſaid, they are afraid of that taſte for dreſs, diſſipation, and irreligion, which a company of comedians are apt to diffuſe among young people. Is there no poſſibility, however, to remedy this inconvenience, by ſevere and well-executed laws, regarding the conduct of the comedians? By ſuch means, Geneva might have theatrical entertainments with good morals, and enjoy the advan-

tage of both. Dramatic repreſentations would have a good effect, in forming the taſte of the ſpectators, and in giving them a ſenſibility and delicacy of ſentiment, which are hardly to be acquired by other means: literature would profit by it, without giving any encouragement to licentiouſneſs; and Geneva might poſſeſs at once the wiſdom of Sparta, and the urbanity of Athens. Another conſideration worthy ſo wiſe a republic, ought, perhaps, to induce them to admit of play-houſes. The barbarous prepoſſeſſion which generally prevails againſt the profeſſion of a comedian, that kind of contempt in which we hold perſons ſo neceſſary to the progreſs and ſupport of the arts, is undoubtedly one of the chief cauſes of that irregularity with which we reproach them; while they endeavour to indemniſy themſelves, by means of pleaſure, for the want of that eſteem which their ſituation cannot obtain. In theſe times, a comedian of good morals merits double reſpect; and yet he is hardly looked upon. The extortioner who oppreſſes the poor, and enriches himſelf by the neceſſities of the public; the fawning courtier who never pays his debts; ſuch are the men who are much more reſpected. Were comedians to be not only tolerated at Geneva, but at firſt ſubjected to proper regulations, then encouraged according to their behaviour, and in time admitted to the rank and privilege of citizens, that city would ſoon have the advantage of a reſpectable company of comedians, which is uſually thought very rare, though it is certainly we that make it ſo. Add to this, they would ſoon become the beſt in Europe; as many perſons who have a taſte and inclination for the theatre,

theatre, and are afraid of disgracing themselves or families by appearing on our stage, would resort to Geneva, to cultivate their agreeable and uncommon talents with esteem. That city also, which now is considered by most French people as very dull and solitary for want of public entertainments, would then become agreeable, as the seat of innocent pleasures, as it is now respectable for that of liberty and philosophy. Foreigners would no longer have reason to be surprised, that regular and decent entertainments should be prohibited in a city which tolerates gross and stupid drolls, as contrary to good taste as to good manners. Nor is this all: the example of the players at Geneva, the regularity of their conduct, and the respect paid them by their fellow-citizens, will probably, by degrees, be followed by comedians of other nations, at the same time that it will serve as a reproof to those who have hitherto treated them with absurd severity. We should see them no longer anathematized by the church, while they were pensioned by the state: our priests would lose the habit of excommunicating them, and our citizens of looking upon them with contempt: thus would a petty republic have the honour of bringing about a reformation in Europe, on a point of greater importance, perhaps, than is generally imagined."

This is, undoubtedly, one of the most agreeable and seductive pictures that can be exhibited to our view; at the same time, it contains the most pernicious advice that can be given us. At least such is my opinion; for which I have given my reasons in the following sheets.

With what avidity will not the youth of Ge-

neva lay hold of the authority of ſo great a writer, to indulge themſelves in notions to which they have already here too much propenſity? How many of our young people are there, who, otherwiſe good citizens, wait with impatience for a favourable opportunity of eſtabliſhing a theatre; thinking, by that means, to do a ſignal ſervice to their country and to mankind? This is the ſubject of my fears, and this the evil I would prevent. At the ſame time, I muſt do juſtice to the intentions of M. d'Alembert, and hope he will do the ſame to mine; for I have no more deſign to give offence to him, than he may have to do an injury to us. But even if after all I ſhould be miſtaken, ought I not to act and ſpeak according to the dictates of my conſcience, and to the beſt of my judgment? Ought I to have been ſilent? Or could I have been ſo, without neglecting my duty, and betraying the intereſts of my country?

To be able to juſtify my ſilence on this occaſion, I ought not to have written on leſs intereſting ſubjects. That agreeable obſcurity which I happily enjoyed for above thirty years, ought to have been always my delight; it ſhould not have been publicly known that I had any connection with the editors of the Encyclopedie, that I furniſhed ſome articles for that work, and that my name is contained in the liſt of its authors. My zeal for my native country ought to be leſs known, in order to warrant a ſuppoſition that the article *Geneva* could eſcape me, or that my ſilence would not give reaſon to think I approved of what it contains. Nothing of all this being true, it was therefore neceſſary for me to ſpeak. I am obliged to diſown what I do not approve, leſt

leſt opinions ſhould be imputed to me which I do not maintain. I am well appriſed that my countrymen by no means want my advice; but I have a mind to do myſelf honour, in ſhewing that I am of their own principles.

I am not to learn, that this eſſay is not only far ſhort of what it ought to be, but that it is even far ſhort of what in my happier days I had it in my power to make it. But ſo many concurrent circumſtances have contributed to render it ſo much below the mediocrity I once could have attained to, that I am aſtoniſhed it is not much worſe than it is. In writing in the defence of my country, if zeal could have ſupplied the want of abilities, I ſhould have even ſurpaſſed what I ever did before; but I ſaw how much was neceſſary to be done, and could not put it into execution.

I have indeed told the plain truth, but who troubles himſelf about that? A very poor way of recommending a book! To be uſeful, it ſhould be agreeable, and my pen hath loſt that art. Some perſons may malignantly diſpute that loſs: but no matter, I perceive myſelf fallen, and none can fall lower than nothing.

In the firſt place, the ſubject of the preſent diſpute is not an idle queſtion in ſpeculative philoſophy; but a practical truth, of importance to a whole nation. I am not addreſſing myſelf to a few, butto the public; nor is it my preſent intention to ſet others on thinking, but to communicate clearly and plainly my own thoughts. It hath been neceſſary for me therefore to change my uſual ſtyle: in order to be underſtood by all kinds of readers, I have uſed many words to expreſs few things; and while I have endeavoured

to render myſelf eaſily intelligible, have been perhaps tedious and diffuſe.

I laid my account at firſt with the publication of a ſheet or two at moſt; but as I began in haſte, ſo the ſubject increaſing under my pen, I permitted it to run on without reſtraint. I was ill and dejected; and, though I wanted ſomething to amuſe and divert me, I found myſelf ſo little diſpoſed to think and write, that if the thoughts of diſcharging my duty had not kept up my ſpirits, I ſhould have thrown my papers frequently into the fire. Hence I am become leſs ſevere and critical on myſelf. I endeavoured in the courſe of my labour to find ſome amuſement to ſupport me; I have, therefore, wandered into every digreſſion that preſented itſelf, without forſeeing how much, by conſulting my own eaſe, I ſhould fatigue the reader.

Taſte, judgment, and correctneſs, are not to be found in this performance. Living in ſolitude, I had no opportunity to ſhew it to any body. I had once indeed a ſevere and judicious Ariſtarchus; but I have him, I would have him, no longer *; although I ſhall inceſſantly regret his loſs, by which my heart ſtill ſuffers even more than my writings.

Solitude calms the ſoul, and ſoftens thoſe paſſions which ariſe from the tumult and diſorder of the world. At a diſtance from the provocations of vice, we ſpeak of it with leſs indignation:

* Though thou dreweſt a ſword at thy friend, yet deſpair not: for there may be a returning to favour. If thou haſt opened thy mouth againſt thy friend, fear not: for there may be a reconciliation; except for upbraiding, or pride, or diſcloſing of ſecrets, or a treacherous wound: for, for theſe things every friend will depart. *Eccl.* chap. xxii. ver. 21, 22.

tion: at a diſtance from the evils which affect us, the heart is leſs moved againſt their enormity. Since I have ceaſed to converſe with mankind, I have almoſt ceaſed to hate the wicked. Beſides, the evil they have done me, deprives me of all right to ſpeak ill of them. Henceforth I muſt forgive, that I may not reſemble them. I ſhould elſe inſenſibly ſubſtitute the love of revenge to that of juſtice; it is better totally to forget them. I hope the reader will find no more of that aſperity, for which my former writings have been cenſured, though it cauſed them to be read: I am content to have fewer readers, on condition of being permitted to live in peace.

To theſe reaſons may be added another, more cruel; and which it would be in vain for me to diſſemble, as the public would know it but too well in ſpite of me. If, among the ſeveral eſſays that have come from my pen, the following ſhould happen to be inferior to the others, it is leſs to be imputed to accidental circumſtances, than to my own fault: I am ſunk below myſelf. Bodily ills exhauſt the ſoul, which loſes its ſpring by dint of ſuffering. A tranſitory inſtant of fermentation produced in me ſome glimmering ray of abilites; but it appeared late in life, and was quickly extinguiſhed. In returning to my natural ſtate, I returned, as it were, to nothing. I exiſted only for a moment; it is paſt, and I muſt bear the diſgrace of ſurviving myſelf. Reader, if you receive this my laſt performance with indulgence, you will be kind to my ſhade; for as to myſelf, I am no more.

Montmorency, March 20. 1758.

EPI-

EPISTLE to M. D'ALEMBERT.

I HAVE read, Sir, with pleaſure your article, under the word GENEVA, in the ſeventh volume of the *Encyclopedie*. It was with ſtill greater pleaſure I gave it a ſecond peruſal; which gave riſe to certain reflections, however, that I think it neceſſary for me, under your auſpices, to ſubmit to the public, and particularly to my fellow-citizens. There is much to be commended in the article above-mentioned: but if the encomiums you have been pleaſed to beſtow on my native country, prevent my returning the compliment to you, my ſincerity will be my excuſe. To confeſs my differing from you in certain points, ſufficiently explains what is my opinion of the reſt.

I ſhall begin with a ſubject that I have the moſt reluctance to examine, and which is perhaps leaſt in my province; though, for the reaſons already given, it is what I am not permitted to paſs over. This is the judgment you hold of the doctrines of our miniſters, in matters of faith. In admitting, that they are lovers of philoſophy, and that they are not afraid to ſtand a philoſophical ſcrutiny, you have paid a very great and very juſt elogium to that reſpectable body, which is applicable to them only of all the clergy in the world, and which muſt ſerve to increaſe that reſpect which they have always teſtified for you. But when we would do honour to others, Sir, we ſhould do it in their manner, and not in our own, leſt they ſhould take reaſonable offence at our commendations; which, however well intended,

tended, may be nevertheleſs injurious to the character and intereſt, or contrary to the opinions and prepoſſeſſions, of thoſe who are commended. Is it poſſible M. d'Alembert can be ignorant that the very name of ſectary is always odious, and that ſuch imputations are ſeldom without their conſequences when thrown out againſt laymen, and never when againſt prieſts?

You will tell me, that the point in queſtion relates to facts and not compliments; and that the philoſopher hath always more regard to truth, than reſpect to perſons. But this pretended truth is not ſo evident nor ſo unimportant that you ſhould venture to advance it without good authority: and I muſt own I do not ſee where ſuch an authority is to be met with, to prove, that the opinions, profeſſed by a public body, are not really their own. You will poſſibly add, that you do not impute theſe opinions to the whole body of the clergy, but to many individuals among them. But *many* in a *ſmall number*, make ſo conſiderable a part of the whole, that they muſt all be in a great degree affected.

Many of the paſtors at Geneva are, according to you, arrant Socinians. This you have boldly declared in the face of all Europe. I will take upon me, however, to aſk on what ground you found this aſſertion? It muſt be on your own conjectures; on the information of a third perſon; or on the "confeſſion of the parties in "queſtion."

Now, in matters of mere doctrine, which have no connection with morality, how can we judge of the faith of others by mere conjecture? How can we judge of it, indeed, on the credit of a third perſon, in contradiction to the aſſurance

rance of the parties themſelves? Again, who can tell ſo well as myſelf, what I do or do not believe; and who, in ſuch a caſe, is to be depended on but one's ſelf? If, after having deduced ſophiſtical and diſavowed conſequences from the converſation or writings of a well-meaning layman, an inveterate prieſt ſhould found a perſecution on ſuch conſequences againſt the author; he would act in character, and nobody would be at all ſurpriſed. But ought we to endeavour to do honour to worthy men, by the ſame means a raſcal makes uſe of to perſecute them? And ſhall a philoſopher imitate thoſe captious arguments, to which he hath ſo often been the victim?

It ſeems natural to think, therefore, that thoſe of the Geneva clergy, whom you charge with being Socinians, and rejecting the doctrine of the eternity of hell-torments, have in confidence declared to you their opinions. But were theſe really their opinions, and had they thus confided in you, they would certainly have done it privately, in the free and ingenuous intercourſe of philoſophical converſation; they would have entruſted the philoſopher, not the author: they have therefore not done it; and my proof of it is, you have publiſhed their pretended ſentiments *.

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* I think I have diſcovered a principle, which, if ſo fully demonſtrated as it might be, would immediately diſarm ſuperſtition and perſecution, and appeaſe the rage of making proſelytes. This is, that human reaſon is not a common determinate ſtandard: ſo that it is unjuſt for any man to lay down his notions of things as a rule for others. We ſuppoſe people to be ſincere; otherwiſe all they ſay is mere idle prate. To a certain degree there are general principles, and a common evidence; beſides which, every one has his own particular way of

I do not take upon me, however, to judge of, or to cenſure the doctrine you impute to them: I only ſay, that no one hath a right to charge it on them, unleſs they profeſs it; except that it does not reſemble any thing they teach us. I know not indeed what Socinianiſm is, ſo can ſay neither good nor ill of it; though from ſome confuſed notions I have of the ſect and its founder, I am rather averſe to, than pleaſed with it: but in general I am a friend to every peaceable religion, in which the ſupreme being is worſhipped in a manner agreeable to that reaſon which he hath beſtowed on us. When a man cannot believe what he thinks abſurd, it is not his fault, it is the fault of his underſtanding; and how can I ever be brought to imagine that God will puniſh him, for not having formed his underſtanding * differently to that which he hath been pleaſed to beſtow on him. Should a

of reaſoning to guide him; ſo that this notion does not lead to ſcepticiſm. But, as the general bounds of reaſon are not fixed, and no one can be a judge of thoſe of another perſon, the peremptory dogmatiſt is ſtopped ſhort in his career. If peace could ever be eſtabliſhed where at preſent there reigns nothing but ſelf-intereſt, pride, and conceit, this conſideration would ſoon put an end to the diſputes of prieſts and philoſophers. But poſſibly neither party would find their intereſt in it, as there would be then no more perſecutions or debates; the former would then have nobody to torment, and the latter nobody to confute; ſo that they would have nothing to do.

If it be aſked me here, why I diſpute myſelf? my anſwer is, that I addreſs myſelf to the majority of the people; that I am endeavouring to explain practical truths; that I rely on experience, diſcharge my duty, and, having declared my opinion, am not diſpleaſed at any one for thinking differently.

* It is to be remembered that I am replying to an author, who is not a Proteſtant; and I conceive the way to anſwer him effectually, is to ſhew that what he charges our miniſters with doing, would be uſeleſs to them, and is what is neceſſarily

a divine come and command me in God's name to believe that the part is greater than the whole, what could I imagine but that the learned profeſſor wanted to make a fool of me! Without doubt the orthodox Chriſtian, who ſees no abſurdity in the myſteries of religion, is bound to believe them; but if the Socinian thinks them abſurd, what ſhall we ſay to him? Shall we attempt to prove to him that they are not abſurd! If we ſhould, he would himſelf begin by proving it to be an abſurdity to reaſon about what cannot be underſtood. What then is to be done? What, indeed, but to let him alone!

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rily done in many other religions, without any notice being taken of it.

The intellectual world, not excepting the region of geometry, is full of incomprehenſible and yet inconteſtable truths; becauſe that reaſon which proves their exiſtence, cannot penetrate, if I may ſo expreſs myſelf, beyond the boundaries by which they are limited; but only ſees them at a diſtance. Such is the doctrine of the exiſtence of the Deity; and ſuch all the myſteries admitted in our Proteſtant creeds. Thoſe myſteries which are ſhocking to reaſon (to uſe Mr d'Alembert's phraſe) are very different.

Their very contradiction brings them within the reach of the underſtanding, and we have all the reaſon in the world to think they have no exiſtence; for though we cannot ſee an abſurd thing, nothing is more eaſy than to ſee a palpable abſurdity. This is the caſe when two propoſitions contradict each other. If you ſay an inch is as long as a foot, you do not advance an obſcure or incomprehenſible myſtery? but an evident abſurdity, a propoſition palpably falſe. Be the proofs in its favour what they will, they cannot equal the demonſtration brought againſt it; becauſe the latter flows directly from the original notions on which all human certainty is founded. Were it otherwiſe, our reaſon would depoſe againſt itſelf, and thereby oblige us to renounce its authority; and, ſo far from making us believe this or that tenet, would prevent our believing any thing; becauſe all foundation for belief would be thus ſubverted. Every man therefore, of what religion ſoever he be, who pretends to believe in ſuch myſteries, either deceives himſelf, or knows not what he affirms.

I am not more offended alſo that thoſe who ſerve a forgiving and merciful God, ſhould reject the eternity of hell-torments if they think it incompatible with his juſtice. Let them in ſuch a caſe put the beſt interpretation they can on ſuch ſcriptural paſſages as contradict their opinion, rather than give it up: for what elſe can they do? No man is more penetrated with a love and veneration for the ſublimeſt of all books than myſelf; it affords me daily conſolation and inſtruction, when others only give me diſguſt. I will nevertheleſs maintain, that even the ſcriptures themſelves, if they were to give us unworthy ideas of the Divine Being, we ought in this particular to reject their authority; even as in mathematics we ſhould reject a demonſtration that might involve an abſurdity: for how great ſoever be the authenticity of the ſacred text, it is ſtill more credible that our bibles may have been corrrupted, than that God ſhould be malevolent or unjuſt. Such, Sir, are the reaſons which would prevent my cenſuring the opinions of equitable and moderate divines, who ſhould learn from their own doctrines that of toleration; obliging no one to adopt their way of thinking. I will go ſtill farther, and confeſs, that ſentiments, ſo conformable to the ſtate of a rational but feeble creature, ſo worthy of a juſt and merciful Creator, are in my opinion far preferable to that ſtupidity which converts man into a brute; and to that barbarous ſpirit of perſecution, which takes a pleaſure in tormenting, even in this life, thoſe whom it conſigns to eternal tortures in the next. In this light, I thank you, in the name of my country, for acknowledging a ſpirit of philoſophy and tolera-

tion in her clergy, and for the juſtice you have done them in this reſpect. So far we are agreed. But it does not follow, that, becauſe they are philoſophical and tolerating *, they ſhould be heretics. I can neither approve nor follow your example, in giving them the names by which you diſtinguiſh them, or in imputing to them the doctrines you lay to their charge. Although there may be nothing in ſuch a ſyſtem diſhonourable to thoſe who adopt it, yet I ſhall be careful of imputing it to our clergy, who have not ſo done; leſt the commendation I might beſtow on the occaſion, ſhould furniſh others with an opportunity ſeriouſly to accuſe them, and ſhould therefore do them more harm than my encomiums might do them good. Wherefore ſhould I take upon me to anſwer for the religious creed of other men? I have been ſufficiently warned to beware of ſuch raſh imputations, many perſons having taken upon themſelves to anſwer for mine, by charging me with irreligion, who certainly never looked into my heart. On ſuch, I ſhall by no means recriminate; one of the obligations religion impoſes on me, being to have a regard to the ſecrets of conſcience. We may judge of the actions of men, but ſhould leave it to God alone to judge of their faith.

But I am perhaps too diffuſe on a ſubject, the examination of which does not properly belong

* On Chriſtian toleration, the reader may conſult the chapter bearing that title in the 11th book of the Chriſtian Doctrine by profeſſor Vernet. He will there ſee reaſons aſſigned why the church ought to act with more circumſpection in cenſuring errors in point of faith, than in condemning thoſe in morals. In all which, it is there ſhewn how Chriſtian moderation, philoſophical prudence, and paſtoral zeal, may be united.

long to me, and is indeed not deſigned to be diſcuſſed in this letter. The miniſters of Geneva need not be obliged to the pens of others to defend their cauſe *: neither am I the perſon they would make choice of for their champion; diſquiſitions of this kind are alſo too little conſiſtent with my inclination, for me to purſue them with any pleaſure: but having occaſion to treat of the article in which you accuſe our clergy of holding opinions which it is not known that they do hold, my ſilence on this topic would appear as if I gave credit to your aſſertion; which I do not. Senſible of the happineſs of poſſeſſing a body of philoſophical and peaceable divines, or rather a corps of officers † of morality and miniſters of virtue, I am greatly ſhocked when there is any occaſion taken to degrade them into mere churchmen. It is of conſequence to us to keep them exactly ſuch as

* This they have themſelves done, as I am informed, by a public declaration; which in my preſent retirement I have not as yet been able to get a ſight of: but I hear it hath been received with approbation by the public.

Thus I enjoy, not only the pleaſure of being the firſt to pay them the honour they deſerve, but alſo that of finding my opinion unanimouſly approved. I am indeed very ſenſible that the exordium of my epiſtle is rendered in a manner ſuperfluous by their declaration; and therefore might, in any other caſe, be looked upon as impertinent: but in going to ſuppreſs it, I recollected, that, while I mentioned the article giving riſe to it, the reaſon above-mentioned ſtill ſubſiſted, and that my ſilence might be conſtrued into conſent. I have permitted, therefore, theſe reflections to ſtand; and that ſo much the more willingly, as, however unſeaſonable they may be now the affair is happily terminated, they contain nothing but what does honour to the church of Geneva, and may be of uſe to the public in general.

† Such is the title conſtantly beſtowed, by the abbe de St Pierre, on the clergy; to intimate either that they really are ſuch, or at leaſt ought to be ſuch.

they are. It is of conſequence to us alſo, that they themſelves ſhould enjoy that peace which they teach us to love, and that neither their tranquillity nor our own ſhould be diſturbed by their odious theological diſputes. It is, in fine, of conſequence to us, to learn from their inſtruction and example, that candour and humanity are alſo the virtues of a Chriſtian.

I haſten now to the diſcuſſion of a queſtion leſs grave and ſerious; but which is important enough to deſerve our conſideration, and which I ſhall examine the more willingly as it is more immediately within my own province: this is, the project of eſtabliſhing a public theatre in Geneva. I ſhall not trouble you with my conjectures concerning the motives that might induce you to recommend an inſtitution ſo contrary to the political maxims of our republic. Whatever might be your reaſons to propoſe it, I have only to do with ours for rejecting it: with regard to yourſelf, therefore, I ſhall only take the liberty to ſay, that you are certainly the firſt philoſopher * that ever encouraged a free people, of a ſmall city, and a poor ſtate, to burden themſelves with theatrical entertainments.

I ſee a number of queſtions to be diſcuſſed in that which you ſeem to have ſo eaſily reſolved: for inſtance, Whether ſuch entertainments are in themſelves ſalutary or pernicious? Whether they

* Of two celebrated hiſtorians, both of them philoſophers, and both admired by Mr. d'Alembert, the modern would be of his opinion: but Tacitus, of whom he is ſo fond, whoſe works he ſtudies and tranſlates, the grave and prudent Tacitus, whom he ſo frequently cites, and whom he ſometimes imitates in every thing but his obſcurity; would he have been of the ſame opinion?

they are compatible with a people's morals, or with the auſterity of manners neceſſary to a republic? Whether they ſhould be permitted in any ſmall city? Whether the profeſſion of a comedian be conſiſtent with probity? Whether the actreſſes can poſſibly be as prudent as other women? Whether even good laws are ſufficient to reſtrain the abuſes that might ariſe from them? Whether ſuch laws would be obſerved? —and many others. Every thing is at preſent problematical with us regarding the actual effects of a theatre; becauſe the diſputes it occaſions are diſcuſſed only between the eccleſiaſticks and the laity, and each party places them in the light of their own peculiar prejudices. Theſe reſearches, Sir, are not unworthy your pen. For my part, without taking upon me to engage in them, I ſhall content myſelf in this eſſay with endeavouring to throw only ſuch light on the ſubject which you have made neceſſary. At the ſame time, I hope you will reflect, that in frankly giving my opinion, as you have done yours, I diſcharge my duty to my country; and that, if I lie under a miſtake, at leaſt my error cannot be injurious to any one.

On the firſt view of theatrical inſtitutions, we ſee they are intended principally for amuſement; and if it be true that people muſt have amuſement, you muſt admit that they are lawful only in proportion as they are neceſſary; while every uſeleſs entertainment is an evil, particularly to a being whoſe life is ſo ſhort and whoſe time is ſo precious.

The ſtate of man hath its pleaſures, which are derived from his nature, and ariſe from his occupations, his connections, and his neceſſities;

and as theſe pleaſures are moſt agreeable to uncorrupted, innocent minds, they render all others in a manner uſeleſs. A father, a ſon, a huſband, a citizen, lie under obligations of ſo pleaſing and intereſting a nature, that they can want no amuſement more agreeable than the diſcharge of them. The proper employment of our time increaſes its value; while the better it is employed, the leſs have we ſtill to ſpare. Thus we find, that the habit of labour renders idleneſs tireſome, and that a good conſcience deprives us of all taſte for frivolous pleaſures. But it is the being diſſatisfied with ourſelves, it is the weight of indolence, it is the loſs of taſte for ſimple and natural pleaſures, that give occaſion to the expediency of artificial entertainments. I do not like to ſee the heart ſet upon theatrical amuſements, as if it was uneaſy or unhappy within itſelf. The anſwer of the barbarian to a perſon, who had been extolling the magnificence of the circus, and the games inſtituted at Rome, was dictated by nature itſelf. Have the Romans, ſaid that honeſt creature, no wives nor children? The Barbarian was in the right. People imagine themſelves to be in company at the theatre, but it is there that every body is alone. We repair thither to forget our relations, our friends, our neighbours; to intereſt ourſelves in fabulous repreſentations; to mourn over the imaginary misfortunes of the dead, or to laugh at the expence of the living. But I ſhould have perceived that this is not the language of the preſent age. Let us endeavour, therefore, to aſſume one that will be better underſtood.

To inquire whether public amuſements are good

good or bad in themſelves, is a queſtion too vague and indeterminate: it would be to examine into a relation before we had fixed the terms of it. They are made for the people, and it is only from their effects on the people that we are to determine their real good or bad qualities. There may be an almoſt infinite variety of ſuch entertainments; and there is a like variety in the manners, conſtitutions, and characters, of different people. I allow that man is every where the ſame; but when he is variouſly modified by religion, government, laws, cuſtoms, prepoſſeſſions, and climates, he becomes ſo different from himſelf, that the queſtion no longer is, what is proper for mankind in general, but what is proper him in ſuch a particular age and country. Hence it is, that the dramatic pieces of Menander, calculated for the Athenian ſtage, were ill ſuited for that of Rome. Hence the combats of the gladiators, which, under the republican government, animated the people with courage and a love of glory, only ſerved, under the emperors, to render the populace brutal, blood-thirſty, and cruel. The very ſame objects, exhibited under different circumſtances, taught the people at one time to deſpiſe their own lives, and at another to ſport with the lives of others.

With reſpect to the ſpecies of public amuſements, it is neceſſarily determined by the particular pleaſure they afford the ſpectators, and not by their public utility. If any utility can be derived from them, it is ſo much the better: but their principal intent is to pleaſe; and provided the people are amuſed, the end is ſufficiently anſwered. This circumſtance alone will ever

ever prevent ſuch inſtitutions from having all the advantages they are capable of; and thoſe perſons muſt be egregiouſly miſtaken, who form an idea of their perfection, ſo inconſiſtent with practice, that they would thereby neceſſarily diſguſt thoſe whom they were intended to inſtruct *. Hence ariſes the difference of public entertainments, according to the taſtes of different nations.

A people of an intrepid, ſaturnine, and cruel diſpoſition, would be fond of perilous and murdering exhibitions exemplifying valour and reſolution; a people ferocious and fiery, would be for bloodſhed and battles, a voluptuous people for muſic and dancing, a polite nation for ſhews of love and gallantry, and a light and frivolous people for thoſe of pleaſantry and ridicule. *Trahit ſua quemque voluptas.*

It is neceſſary, in order to pleaſe them, that their

* "Some public entertainments are undoubtedly bad in "themſelves, as being cruel, indecent, or licentious; ſuch "were ſome of the games among the Pagans. But there are "others of a nature totally indifferent, and which are bad on"ly from the abuſe of them. Thus, for example, dramatic "entertainments have nothing eſſentially bad in themſelves, "in ſo far as they truly repreſent the various characters and "actions of mankind. They might even be rendered, not on"ly agreeable, but inſtructive, to people of all ranks. But, if "they inculcate corrupt morals; if the actors of them lead a "life of debauchery, and contribute to debauch others; if "ſuch entertainments encourage luxury, vanity, idleneſs, and "incontinency; it is evident that they tend to a very bad "purpoſe; and that, unleſs a method could be found to guard "againſt ſuch abuſes, we had better altogether renounce them." *Inſtruction Chretienne*, T. 3. L. 3. Ch. 16.

Here we ſee the queſtion fairly ſtated. The point is, Whether the morality of the theatre be really corrupt; whether the abuſes are inevitable; and whether the inconveniencies ariſe from the nature of the thing itſelf, or from extraneous cauſes which it may be poſſible to remove.

their public entertainments ſhould favour their ſeveral diſpoſitions, whereas they ought in reaſon to moderate them.

The ſtage in general preſents us with a picture of the human paſſions; the original of which is in the heart: but if the poet were not careful to flatter theſe paſſions, the ſpectators would ſoon be offended; as they would not like to ſee themſelves in ſuch a light as muſt render them contemptible. If he draws ſome characters in odious colours, it is ſuch only as are not general, and which are naturally odious. And in this, the poet does nothing more than adopt the public opinion; while even theſe diſguſtful paſſions are always employed to recommend others, more agreeable to the ſpectators, without being more lawful. Reaſon is the only thing that is uſeleſs on the ſtage. The character of a man without paſſions, or who ſhould keep them always under command, would be totally unintereſting: and it hath been already obſerved, that a ſtoic in a tragedy would be an inſupportable perſonage, and in comedy would at beſt only make one laugh.

Let us not aſcribe to the theatre, therefore, the power of changing ſentiments and manners, when it can only purſue and embelliſh them. A dramatic writer who ſhould oppoſe the general taſte of the public, would ſoon be left to write only for himſelf. When Moliere corrected the comic drama, he attacked only ridiculous modes and characters; but in doing this he indulged the public taſte *, as did alſo Corneille.

* Had even Moliere lived earlier, he would have found it difficult to keep his ground; the moſt perfect of all his writings

neille. It was the old French ſtage that began to diſpleaſe this taſte; becauſe, while the nation improved in politeneſs, the ſtage ſtill retained its primitive barbariſm.

It is for the ſame reaſon, that, as the general taſte is ſo greatly altered ſince their times, the very beſt pieces of theſe two authors, if now firſt brought on the ſtage, would infallibly be damned. The connoiſſeurs may admire them as much as they pleaſe; the public admire them rather becauſe they are aſhamed to do otherwiſe, than from any real beauties they diſcover in them. It is ſaid, indeed, that a good piece can never miſcarry: truly, I believe it; but this is becauſe a really good piece is never diſguſting to the manners * of the times. There cannot be the leaſt doubt that the very beſt tragedy of Sophocles would be totally damned in our theatres. It is impoſſible for us to put ourſelves in the place of people to whom we bear no ſort of reſemblance.

Every

tings being damned in its firſt appearance, becauſe he brought it out too early, the age not being enlightened enough to receive the Miſanthrope.

All this is founded on an evident maxim; which is, that a people often continue to practiſe cuſtoms they deſpiſe, as ſoon as any one ſtarts up bold enough to ſet the example. In my time, when the faſhionable folly of playing with Pantins was at the higheſt, the comedians only laughed on the ſtage at what even thoſe who thus amuſed themſelves laughed as well as they. But the ſettled diſpoſitions, cuſtoms, and prejudices of a people ought always to have ſome deference paid it on the ſtage. No poet ever found his account in acting otherwiſe.

* I uſe the words *taſte* and *manners* here indifferently; for, though they do not ſtand for the ſame things, they have ever one common original, and are ſubject to the ſame revolutions. Not that good taſte and good manners always prevail together, which is a propoſition worthy diſcuſſion; but that a certain degree of taſte always anſwers to a certain ſtate of manners, is indiſputable.

Every author who undertakes to deſcribe foreign manners, is very careful, however, to accommodate his piece to ours. It would be impoſſible for him to ſucceed without this caution; and even the ſucceſs of it often depends on cauſes very different from thoſe to which it is imputed by a ſuperficial obſerver. When Harlequin-Savage is ſo well received by the ſpectators, can it be thought to proceed from the liking which they have for the ſenſe and ſimplicity of ſuch a character, or that any one of them has an inclination to reſemble him? Quite the contrary. The piece humours the general taſte; which is, to be fond of novelties; and nothing can be newer to a Pariſian audience than a picture of nature. Is is their very averſion to things which are uſual and common, that ſometimes induces them to return to the moſt ſimple.

It follows from the firſt of theſe obſervations, that the general effect of a theatrical entertainment is to enforce the national character, to augment the natural inclination, and to give a new energy to all the paſſions of a people.

In this ſenſe it ſhould ſeem, that, as this effect is confined to the heightening, and does not extend to the altering, of eſtabliſhed manners, the comedy would be ſalutary for the virtuous, and bad for the vicious. In the firſt caſe, however, it ſtill remains to be determined, Whether the paſſions, when too much heightened, do not generate into vices. I know that dramatic poeſy pretends to the contrary, and to purge the paſſions while it excites them; but I do not readily comprehend this kind of purgation. Can it be that, in order to grow temperate and prudent,

dent, we muſt firſt be made intemperate and fooliſh?

"Oh no! it is not that, ſay the partiſans "of the theatre. Tragedy, indeed, pretends "that we are to be moved by all the paſſions it "deſcribes; but it does not always require that "we ſhould be affected in the ſame manner as "a perſon really under the tormenting influence "of paſſion. Its aim, on the contrary, is moſt "frequently to excite ſentiments very different "from thoſe which actuate the perſons of the "drama."

They farther tell us, that, although the poets ſometimes make an ill uſe of their power over the heart, in order to influence the audience in favour of a bad character; this error ought to be imputed to ignorance, or to the depravity of the artiſt, not to the art. They tell us, in ſhort, that a faithful repreſentation of the paſſions, and the anxieties attending them, alone ſuffices to make us avoid them with all poſſible ſolicitude.

Let us but conſult our own hearts, however, at the end of a tradegy, and we ſhall be convinced of the inſufficiency and inſincerity of ſuch pleas. Do the emotions, the trouble, the compaſſion, we feel during the piece, and even ſome time after it is over, ſhew any diſpoſition to ſurmount and regulate our paſſions? Are thoſe lively and affecting impreſſions, which grow habitual, and are ſo often reiterated, proper to moderate our paſſions and affections in caſes of neceſſity? Why ſhould the ſenſe of pain ariſing from the paſſions, efface that of pleaſure and tranſport ariſing from the ſame ſource; and which the authors take care to height-

heighten as much as poſſible, in order to render their performances agreeable? Are not all the paſſions known ſiſters, one of which only is ſufficient to excite a thouſand? And do not we know that to oppoſe the one to the other, is only the way to render the heart more ſuſceptible of them all? The only inſtrument which ſerves to purge them is reaſon, and I have already ſaid that reaſon hath no effect on the ſtage. It is certain that we do not partake of the feelings or affections of all the characters; for their intereſts being oppoſed, the poet muſt ſo contrive it, as to induce us to give the preference to one of the parties; otherwiſe we ſhall not intereſt ourſelves in any: but he is ſo far from chuſing, to this end, the paſſions he would make us love, that he is compelled to make choice of thoſe we already prefer. What I have ſaid of the ſpecies of plays, ought alſo to be underſtood of the paſſions and intereſts that prevail in them.

At London, a play intereſts the audience, if calculated to make them hate the French; at Tunis, the prevailing paſſion is for piracy; at Meſſina, for revenge; at Goa, for the honour of burning a Jew. Let an author go retrogade to theſe maxims *; and, though he may write a very good play, he will find nobody will come to ſee it. In ſuch a caſe alſo, he would be

* Thus, for example, let him, on the French ſtage, repreſent a plain, honeſt, ſimple clown, incapable of making fine ſpeeches, and deſtitute of love and gallantry; at the ſame time, let him repreſent a philoſopher free from prejudices, who, after having been inſulted by a bravo, does not think it expedient to be run through the body by the aggreſſor: then let him employ the whole force of dramatic writing to render theſe characters as intereſting as the Cid. I am much miſtaken if he will ſucceed.

charged with ignorance, and that very juſtly, for having neglected the very firſt principle of his art, which ſerves as a baſis to all the reſt; that is, to pleaſe. Thus the ſtage purges the paſſions we have not, and irritates thoſe we have. Is not this a medicine admirably adminiſtered?

A concurrence of general and particular cauſes will therefore always hinder theatrical exhibitions from attaining that perfection they are capable of, and from producing thoſe good effects one might expect from them. But were we even to ſuppoſe this perfection as great as poſſible, and the people as well diſpoſed as one could deſire; their effects would ſtill be next kin to nothing, for want of means to render them ſenſible. I know but of three kinds of inſtruments, by means of which the manners of a people are to be acted on; viz. the power of the laws, the influence of opinion, and the allurements of pleaſure. Now the laws have no acceſs to the ſtage; where the leaſt reſtraint * would give pain inſtead of amuſement. The authority of opinion depends on it as little; for inſtead of the theatre's giving laws to the public, it receives them from it: and with regard to the pleaſure we find there, its only effect is to make us the more often return thither.

We

* The laws may determine the ſubject and form of the pieces, and their manner of being acted; but they cannot compel the public to be pleaſed with them. When Nero ſung on the ſtage, he commanded that thoſe ſhould have their throats cut who could not keep open their eyes; and yet he could not keep them all awake, the pleaſure of a ſhort nap having been near coſting Veſpaſian his life. O, ye moſt egregious performers of the French opera, had you but been poſſeſſed of Nero's imperial authority, I certainly ſhould not at preſent have cauſe to lament having lived too long.

We ſhall ſee if there can be any other. The ſtage, it is ſaid, if directed as it may and ought to be, would ſerve to render virtue amiable and vice odious. Well, and what then? Were not honeſt men reſpected and knaves deteſted before there were any comedies? And are they leſs ſo in places where there are no theatrical entertainments? The ſtage ſerves to render virtue amiable—A great matter truly, to effect what nature and reaſon had done before! Bad men are rendered odious on the ſtage—Pray, are they leſs ſo in ſociety, when they are known to be ſuch? Is it very certain that this odium is to be imputed to the art of the writer, rather than to the actions of which he repreſents them guilty? Is it very certain that the ſimple relation of thoſe crimes would fill us with leſs indignation than ariſes from all the glowing colours in which he hath deſcribed them? If all his art conſiſts in exhibiting malefactors, in order to render them hateful to us, I ſee nothing ſo very admirable in ſuch art; and we have of theſe too many real examples in real life, to need having any recourſe to the fictitious ones of the drama. Shall I venture to add another ſuſpicion that ſuggeſts itſelf? I much doubt whether any perſon, to whom one ſhould ſimply relate the crimes of Phædra and Medea before he ſaw the play, would not abhor them much more at the beginning of the firſt act than at the end of the repreſentation; and if ſo, what muſt we think of the ſo much boaſted effects of the theatre?

I ſhould be glad to ſee it clearly and conciſely demonſtrated, how the drama can produce ſentiments in us that we had not before in our

minds, and cauſe us to judge of moral entities otherwiſe than we judge of them within ourſelves. Believe me, theſe mighty pretenſions, if examined into, will be all found to be inſignificant and puerile. If the beauty of virtue were the work of art, it would have been long ſince defaced! As to myſelf, let me be treated as a bad man for ſaying that mankind were born good; I care not, as I think I have fully proved it. The ſource of our love for virtue, and our hatred to vice, is ſeated within ourſelves, and is not to be found in the play. No art can produce it, although it may take advantage of it. The love of the beautiful * is a ſentiment as natural to the human heart as that of ſelf-love. It does not ſpring from any arrangement or diſpoſition of the ſcenes: the writer doth not carry it to the theatre, he finds it there; and it is by flattering this purity of ſentiment he is enabled to draw forth thoſe tears which ſometimes flow from the audience.

Conceive the theatre to be as perfect as you will; where is the man who, on going thither the firſt time, does not go previouſly convinced of the truth of what is inculcated there, and already prejudiced in favour of thoſe characters which are rendered amiable? But this is not the point in diſpute; it is to act in conformity with our

* I mean here what is *morally* beautiful: for, let philoſophers ſay what they pleaſe, this love is implanted in human nature, as an innate principle of conſcience.

As an example of what is above aſſerted, I might cite the little entertainment, entitled Nanine, which has made the audience groan, and has been ſupported merely by the great reputation of the author; and all this, becauſe honour, virtue, and the ſimplicity of nature, are preferred to the impertinent prepoſſeſſions of rank.

our principles, and to imitate thoſe we eſteem. The heart of man is always upright, reſpecting what does not immediately regard his own perſonal intereſt. Thus we ever take the ſide of juſtice in quarrels of which we are merely ſpectators, and feel an high indignation at every baſeneſs from which we can derive no perſonal advantage: but when our own intereſt is concerned, our ſentiments are preſently corrupted; and it is in this caſe only that we prefer the evil which is uſeful to us, to the good which we ſhould otherwiſe naturally approve. Is it not a neceſſary effect, inſeparable from the conſtitution of things, that a bad man ſhall poſſeſs a two-fold advantage in all his actions; one ariſing from his own injuſtice, and the other from the probity of others? Could he poſſibly enter into a more advantageous treaty, than to engage the whole world to be honeſt except himſelf; ſo that every one ſhould behave juſtly towards him, and he unjuſtly towards every body? He loves virtue, without doubt; but it is the virtue of other people, becauſe he hopes to profit by it; he does not chuſe to practiſe it himſelf, becauſe it would be hurtful to his intereſt. What does he go to ſee and hear, therefore, at the theatre? Exactly what he would be glad to meet with every where; lectures of moral virtue for the public, out of which number he is himſelf excepted; and examples of men ſacrificing every thing to their duty, while he himſelf is bound by none.

I hear it ſaid, that tragedy excites to pity by means of terror. But what is this pity? A tranſitory and fruitleſs emotion, which laſts no longer than the alluſion producing it; the re-

mains of natural feeling preſently ſtifled by the paſſions; in a word, only a barren compaſſion indulging itſelf in a few tears, but never productive of any act of humanity. Thus did the blood-thirſty Sylla weep at the recital of all thoſe misfortunes which he himſelf did not inflict. Thus did Alexander, the tyrant of Pheræ, hide himſelf in the theatre, that he might not be ſeen to ſigh with Priam and Andromache, although he could hear without emotion the cries of the unhappy wretches who were daily butchered at his commands.

If the obſervation of Diogenes Laertius be true, that the heart is more affected by imaginary than by real evils; if theatrical repreſentations ſometimes cauſe us to ſhed more tears than would flow from the actual appearance of the object repreſented; it is leſs, according to the Abbe du Bos, becauſe the emotion is weaker and does not amount to grief, than becauſe it is pure, and without any alloy of concern for ourſelves *. In ſhedding tears at fictitious misfortunes, we diſcharge all the duties humanity requires of us on ſuch occaſions, without any farther inconvenience to ourſelves: whereas, when perſons are under real miſeries, humanity requires ſomething more: it requires us to afford them aſſiſtance, relief, and conſolation; which would be making us partake of their affections,

* The abbe aſſerts, that the poet makes us grieve only juſt to what degree we ourſelves pleaſe, and that he intereſts us in the fate of his heroes juſt ſo far as we think proper. But this is contrary to experience. Many people forbear going to ſee tragedies, becauſe they are ſo deeply affecting as to be diſpleaſing: others, again, weep at a play, who are nevertheleſs aſhamed of it, but cannot avoid it. And theſe effects are too frequent not to be more than mere exceptions to a general rule.

ſections, or involve us at leaſt in ſolicitudes from which our natural indolence would willingly exempt us. Hence it may be ſaid, that the human heart is ſelfiſh, and afraid of being hurt by feeling for others. But on the whole, when a man goes to a play in order to admire the heroic actions of fabulous characters, and to weep at imaginary misfortunes, what more can be expected of him? Is he not perfectly ſatisfied with himſelf? Does he not even boaſt his ſenſibility? Does he not acquit himſelf of every thing he owes to virtue, by doing honour to its appearance on the ſtage? What would we have of him more? Would you have him practiſe it himſelf?——He has no part to play; he is no comedian.

The more I reflect on this matter, the more I find, that whatever is repreſented on the ſtage is ſo far from being brought home to us, that it is rather removed to a greater diſtance. When I ſee the play of the Earl of Eſſex, the reign of queen Eliſabeth is in my apprehenſion thrown two centuries back. And if an event that happened yeſterday were to be repreſented on the ſtage, I ſhould conceive it to have happened at leaſt in the time of Moliere. The theatre hath rules, maxims, and morals, as well as dreſs, peculiar to itſelf; of which we very naturally and juſtly obſerve, Nothing of all this is proper for us; and indeed ſhould think it as ridiculous to adopt the virtues of dramatic heroes, as to ſtrut about in ſhapes, or to talk in blank verſe. Of all thoſe ſublime ſentiments and brilliant maxims, therefore, that are ſo emphatically extolled in the theatre, it is plain they are calculated only for the ſtage, repreſenting virtue as a pretty theatrical

trical amuſement; the practice of which it would be mighty abſurd to think of carrying into life. Thus the moſt advantageous impreſſion of the beſt tragedies is to reduce the duties and obligations of life to a few tranſitory affections, fruitleſs and ineffectual: juſt as ſome polite people conceive they have done an act of charity, in beſtowing a mere verbal bleſſing on a poor object as they paſs by.

It is true, that the ſtage might be made to aſſume a plainer appearance, and that the language and modes of the theatre might be more accommodated to real life. But manners are deſcribed only, not corrected, by ſuch means; for deformity is never ſhocking to thoſe who are in like manner deformed. And yet ſhould we attempt to correct them by aggravating the deſcription into caricatura, we ſhould depart from nature; the picture would have no reſemblance, and be of no effect. Exaggeration doth not make objects odious, ſo much as it makes them ridiculous: whence reſults this great inconvenience, that we are ſo afraid of ridicule, that vice no longer ſtrikes us with horror; and yet we cannot cure the former, without encouraging the latter. You will aſk perhaps, why this oppoſition ſhould be thought ſo neceſſary? Why, Sir! becauſe men of probity never laugh at the vicious, but heartily deſpiſe them; nor is there any thing in the world leſs pleaſant or riſible than the juſt indignation of virtue. Ridicule is, on the other hand, the favourite weapon of vice. With this it aſſails the veneration due to virtue, till even the very ſenſe of it is in time extinguiſhed in the human breaſt.

Thus are we compelled to renounce that falſe idea

idea of perfection which is imputed to dramatic entertainments as calculated for public utility. It is an error, says a certain grave writer, to expect that in plays we should see the true relations of things; the poet seeking only, in general, to adapt them to the public taste. In comedy, he diminishes every thing, and sinks it below the standard of nature; in tragedy, he is inflated into heroism, and rises as far above humanity as he was before below it. Thus in the theatre all is disproportionate, and we constantly see characters on the stage that are to be met with no where else. So certain, indeed, is this disproportion, that Aristotle, in his Art of Poetry, lays it down as a rule: "Comedia enim "deteriores, tragædia meliores quam nunc sunt "imitari conantur." This is undoubtedly a well intended imitation, that proposeth for its object what has no existence, to the neglect of the mean between deficiency and excess, which really doth exist, as if it were entirely useless! But of what consequence is the exactness of the imitation, if the illusion succeeds? The point is to excite the curiosity of the people. Dramatic productions, like all other master-pieces of human wit, have no other end than public applause. When the author meets with this applause, and the actors share in it, the end of the whole is answered, and they never trouble themselves farther about the matter. Now if it have no good effect, it must have a bad one; and as this is not at all doubtful, the question seems to be determined. But to produce some examples, that may render the solution of it more sensible:

I may venture to advance, as a truth easy to prove

prove in conſequence of the preceding, that the French theatre, with all its faults, is nevertheleſs as nearly perfect as it can be, both with reſpect to amuſement and utility; and that theſe advantages are united in ſuch a proportion, that it cannot be diſturbed without taking from one more than would be given to the other, and therefore would render the ſtage ſtill more imperfect. Not that a man of genius might not invent a kind of pieces preferable to thoſe at preſent in uſe: but this new kind of drama, ſtanding conſtantly in need of the author's peculiar abilities to ſupport it, would of courſe die with him; when his ſucceſſors, deſtitute of the ſame reſources, would be forced to have recourſe to the ordinary means to intereſt and pleaſe the audience. Theſe means are, at preſent, celebrated exploits, great names, horrid crimes, and ſublime virtues, in tragedy; ridicule and drollery, in comedy; and love-ſcenes, in both *. I aſk, Of what advantage can all this be to a people's morals?

It may be ſaid, that, in theſe pieces, villany is always puniſhed, and virtue rewarded, agreeable to poetical juſtice. But, admitting this to be always true; yet, as the ſubjects of our tragedies are moſtly fabulous, the known invention of the poet's brain, they make not any great impreſſion on the audience: by letting them ſee it is our intention to inſtruct them, our intention is diſappointed.

Again,

* The Greeks were not under any neceſſity of founding the principal intereſt of their tragedy on the paſſion of love; nor indeed did they do it. With us, who have not the ſame reſources, we cannot do without it. The reaſon of this difference will appear in the ſequel.

Again, I anſwer, That poetical juſtice diſtributes its puniſhments and rewards in ſuch an unuſual manner, that we never can expect to ſee any thing like it in the natural courſe of things. And laſtly, I reply, by denying the fact. It neither is, nor can be, generally true: for this not being the principal aim of the poet, he muſt very ſeldom be able to attain it, and it would as often be an obſtacle to the ſucceſs of his endeavours to pleaſe. It is of little conſequence whether vice or virtue prevails, provided the ſpectator is impoſed on by the grandeur of appearances? Thus, on the French ſtage, which is undoubtedly the moſt perfect, or at leaſt the beſt regulated, we ſee the triumphs of great villains as well as great heroes; witneſs Cataline, Mahomet, Atreus, and many others.

I am well aware, that we muſt not always judge, by the cataſtrophe, of the moral effect of a tragedy; or that the intent is anſwered, when the ſpectators are more affected by ſeeing virtue in diſtreſs than vice triumphant: which does not prevent, even then, the pretended rule from being violated. As there is nobody who would not rather have been a Britannicus than a Nero, I admit that we ought to applaud the play in which their actions are repreſented, notwithſtanding Britannicus periſhes in it. But from the ſame principle, what judgment ſhall we form of a tragedy in which, though the criminals are juſtly puniſhed, yet they are conſtantly repreſented in ſo favourable a light, that every body is intereſted in their favour? Plays, in which Cato, the greateſt of mankind, acts the part of a mere pedant? in which Cicero, the guardian of the republic, that Cicero who firſt

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merited and was firſt honoured with the title of Father of his country, is repreſented as a daſtardly coward and pitiful rhetorician; while the infamous Catiline, guilty of unheard-of crimes, and juſt on the point of murdering the Roman magiſtrates, and reducing his native city to aſhes, plays the part of an hero, and by his abilities, reſolution, and courage, conciliates the eſteem of the audience? I confeſs, if you will, that Catiline was a man of fortitude; but was he, for that reaſon, the leſs a villain? And ought the deteſted crimes of a public robber to be repreſented in the ſame glowing colours as the exploits of an hero? To what, therefore, tends the moral of that piece, except to encourage future Catilines, and to beſtow on wicked men of great talents the applauſe which is due only to men of great virtues. But ſuch is the taſte a poet is obliged to comply with, ſuch are the manners of an enlightened age! Learning, wit, and courage, only, attract our admiration; while thou, moſt meek and modeſt Virtue, thou remaineſt alone unhonoured! Blind as we are in the midſt of ſuch a profuſion of light, abſurd victims to our own applauſe, ſhall we never learn how deteſtable is the man, who miſapplies and abuſes the talents given him by nature, to prove the plague and misfortune of mankind!

The tragedies of Atreus and Mahomet have not even the poor reſource of a cataſtrophe; the monſter, who is the hero of each of thoſe pieces, attaining the end of his villainy, and enjoying the fruits of it in peace, One of them ſays in expreſs terms in the laſt verſe;

Et

Et je jouis enfin du prix de mes forfaits *.

I am indeed loath to ſuppoſe, that, when the ſpectators are diſmiſſed with this moſt excellent maxim, they will actually conclude thence, that vice is conſtantly rewarded with pleaſure and profit; but I would willingly aſk them, what profit they could poſſibly reap from a play tending to enforce and illuſtrate ſuch a maxim?

With reſpect to Mahomet, the fault of fixing the public admiration on a guilty character, would have been ſo much the greater in this play, as the author has given it another colouring, had not he taken care to excite a reſpect and veneration for a ſecond perſonage; capable of effacing, or at leaſt of counteracting, the terror and aſtoniſhment inſpired by Mahomet. The action of this play, eſpecially in the ſcene where they both appear together, is ſo artfully conducted, that Mahomet, without acting out of character, or loſing any thing of that ſuperiority which is proper and peculiar to him, is eclipſed merely by the intrepidity, the good ſenſe, and virtue, of Zopirus †. It required a writer

* *At length I reap the fruits of my miſdeeds.*

† I remember that I formerly thought there was more fire and ſublimity in the ſcene between Omar and Zopirus, than in that between the latter and Mahomet: and this I took to be a defect in the piece. On thinking better of it, however, I have altered my opinion. Omar, who is tranſported with fanaticiſm, ought to ſpeak of his maſter with that enthuſiaſtic zeal and admiration, which raiſe him in a manner above the ſtate of humanity. But Mahomet is not a fanatic: he is a deſigning villain, who knows it is needleſs to act the part of a ſaint in the company of Zopirus: he ſtrives therefore to gain him over by an affected confidence and motives of ambition. From the part, therefore, he hath here to play, he muſt of courſe

fully ſenſible of his own powers, to venture to introduce two ſuch characters in the ſame ſcene. Indeed, this particular ſcene hath not been ſo univerſally admired as it deſerves: for I know not any one of the whole French theatre, that contains more maſterly ſtrokes, or wherein the ſacred character of virtue has a more ſenſible advantage over ſublimity of genius.

Another conſideration which tends to juſtify this piece, is, that the poet does not merely intend to expoſe criminal actions in general, but thoſe which ariſe from a ſpirit of fanaticiſm in particular, in order that the world may be ſolicitous to diſtinguiſh and guard againſt them. Unhappily ſuch ſolicitude is not only uſeleſs, but is frequently dangerous. Fanaticiſm is not an error, but an infatuated and blind rage, which can never be reſtrained by reaſon. The only way to ſtop its progreſs, is to reſtrain the perſons of thoſe who propagate it. It is in vain to remonſtrate to madmen, that they are impoſed on by their leaders: they will be ſtill as eager to follow them as ever. Wherever fanaticiſm has once gained ground, there is but one way to check it; which is, to aſſail it with its own weapons. Argument and reaſon have nothing to do in the affair. You muſt throw aſide philoſophy, cloſe your books, draw the ſword and puniſh the impoſtors. In reſpect to Maho-

courſe ſhine leſs than Omar; and that becauſe he is in a more exalted ſtation, and hath a greater knowledge of mankind. He gives the audience to underſtand as much: it was therefore my own fault that I did not perceive it; but this will happen to us petty authors. In attempting to cenſure the works of our maſters, our ignorance leads us to miſtake a thouſand things for defects, which in the eyes of good judges are real beauties.

Mahomet, I am alſo farther apprehenſive, that his magnanimity will ſerve greatly to diminiſh the villany of his crimes in the opinion of the audience; and that a play of this kind, repreſented before perſons capable of choice, would tend more to make each a Mahomet than a Zopirus. It is, at leaſt, very certain, that ſuch ſort of examples afford very little encouragement to virtue.

No ſuch apology can indeed be made for the character of Atreus: the horror it excites, is all thrown away: we learn nothing of him but to ſhudder at his villany: and though he is great only in his rage, there is not a ſingle character in the whole play capable of attracting any ſhare of the attention of the audience with him; for, as to the whining Pliſthenes, I cannot conceive how he is even ſupportable in ſuch a tragedy. Seneca has intermixed no love in his play of Atreus; and as the modern poet thought proper to copy him in almoſt every other circumſtance, he ought to have imitated him in that alſo. It certainly requires a great pliancy of diſpoſition, to bear with ſcenes of gallantry joined to thoſe of Atreus.

Before I diſmiſs this performance, I cannot help remarking one ſpecies of merit in it; which may poſſibly appear to many as a fault. The part of Thyeſtes comes the neareſt to the taſte of the ancients, of all thoſe which have been introduced on the French ſtage: he is neither a hero in point of courage, nor a model of virtue; nor can he be ſaid, on the other hand, to be a villain. He is only a weak man, who engages our pity; and that merely becauſe he is a man, and is unhappy. It is for this very reaſon that

I think the ſentiment he excites is extremely affecting: for this man is in a great meaſure like ourſelves; whereas heroiſm, being above our reach, rather dazzles the imagination than affects the paſſions. It is to be wiſhed that our ſublime writers would condeſcend to lower their flights a little, and to move our compaſſion for the common ſufferings of humanity; leſt, by habitually directing our pity only to unfortunate heroes, we may grow by degrees inſenſible to all compaſſion. The ancients had heroes; notwithſtanding which, they brought the characters of common life on the ſtage; but we introduce none but heroes, and have hardly any common characters. The ancients ſpoke of humanity in a leſs ſtudied phraſe than we; but they knew better than we how to practiſe it. There is a paſſage in Plutarch which may be applied to them and us with propriety, and which I cannot forbear tranſcribing. "At the theatre in Athens, a venerable old man was looking about for a ſeat; which ſome young ones at a diſtance perceiving, they beckoned him to come to them, intimating they would make way for him; but when he came near them, they filled up their ſeat, and made a jeſt of him. The old man went from ſeat to ſeat, in great confuſion; being all the while ridiculed by the Athenian youth. But the Spartan ambaſſadors being preſent, and ſeeing his diſtreſs, roſe up and placed him honourably in the midſt of them. The tranſaction was noticed by the whole audience, and the behaviour of the Spartans was received with univerſal applauſe: whilſt the old man ſhook his head, and cried, *What a pity that the Athenians ſhould know what good manners are, but that the*

the Lacedemonians only ſhould put them in practice!" Such is the ſame obſervation that will hold good between modern philoſophy and ancient manners.

To return to my ſubject. What is it we learn from Phædra and Oedipus, except that man is not a free agent, but that the Deity puniſhes him for crimes which he forces him to commit? What from Medea, but that the rage of jealouſy may render a mother cruel and unnatural? If we purſue thus an examination into moſt of our French tragedies, we ſhall find they abound with monſters of vice and iniquity; whoſe actions may poſſibly render the play amuſing, and exerciſe our virtue; but are certainly dangerous, as they accuſtom the eye to ſcenes of diſguſt and horror, which ought not to be known, or even thought poſſible. It is not true, that even murder and parricide are always rendered odious. By the convenient aid of a few arbitrary ſuppoſitions, they become lawful, or at leaſt excuſable. Are we not inclined to pity Phædra, though guilty of inceſt and of ſhedding innocent blood? Even Syphax, who poiſons his wife; the young Horatius, who ſtabs his ſiſter; Agamemnon, who ſacrifices his daughter; and Oreſtes, who cuts the throat of his own mother; are all intereſting perſonages. Add to this, that the poet, in order to make them ſpeak in character, is compelled to put into the mouths of villains, the moſt abandoned principles and maxims, dreſſed up in all the pomp of verſe and declamation for the improvement of the audience.

The Greeks bore with theſe performances, becauſe they contained ſome of their old popu-

lar traditions, which had been many ages current among them; for the revival of which they had their peculiar reaſons, as they had for expoſing ſome of the characters to public averſion. But when theſe reaſons no longer ſubſiſt, how can the ſame tragedy find ſpectators among us, able to bear the ſhocking images it exhibits to their view, or the villanous characters it introduces on the ſtage? Here one man kills his father, marries his mother, and diſcovers himſelf to be the brother of his own children. Another forces a ſon to murder his own father. A third compels a father to drink the blood of his ſon. It is impoſſible not to be ſhocked at the bare idea of theſe horrid ſcenes; which have been repreſented on the French ſtage for the amuſement of the moſt ſuſceptible and humane people in the world. No. I will maintain, and call the horror of my readers to witneſs, that the ſhows of the gladiators at Rome were not half ſo barbarous. They ſhed human blood, it is true; but they did not ſully the imagination with ideas of crimes to make nature ſhudder. Tragedy, as it ſtands at preſent, is happily ſo far removed from common life, and exhibits to us ſuch gigantic, chimerical, and monſtrous characters, that the example of their vices is as little contagious as that of their virtues is uſeful; hence it is, at the ſame time, that the leſs it attempts to inſtruct, the leſs hurtful it is found. It is quite otherwiſe, however, with regard to comedy; in which the manners have a more direct relation to our own, and the characters have a greater reſemblance to human nature. This is altogether bad and pernicious; and the whole of it being intereſting and conſequential to the

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ſpectators, while even the taſte for the comic ſcene being founded on a vicious turn of the human heart, it is one of the corollaries of the principle, that the more perfect and agreeable a comedy is, the more fatal is its effect on manners. But, without repeating what I have already ſaid of its nature, I ſhall content myſelf in this place with making an application, and with taking a ſhort view of your comic theatre.

Let us begin with it at the time of its perfection; that is to ſay, at its birth. It is univerſally agreed, and becomes every day more and more certain, that Moliere is the beſt of all our comic writers; and yet it is undeniable that the plays of this very writer, whoſe talents nobody admires more than myſelf, afford abundant leſſons for vice and corruption, and thoſe ſtill more dangerous than ſuch as are contained in the books in which vice is profeſſedly taught. His principal attention is to turn innocence and ſimplicity into ridicule; and to repreſent the party for whom we intereſt ourſelves as dexterous and cunning. His men of probity are only ſo in words; his knaves are ſuch in their actions, and are frequently crowned with ſignal ſucceſs: in a word, applauſe is an honour ſeldom conferred on perſons of the greateſt worth, but almoſt always on thoſe of the deepeſt cunning.

Examine the *vis comica* of this author, and you will find, that the vices of characters are its inſtrument, and natural defects its ſubject; that the malice of the one puniſhes the ſimplicity of the other; and that fools are conſtantly made the prey of knaves. That this is too much the caſe in the world, is certain; but it ought not there-

therefore to be repreſented with applauſe and approbation on the ſtage, as if knaves were to be encouraged to puniſh the ſimplicity of honeſt people under the appellation of folly.

Dat veniam corvis, vexat cenſura columbas.

Such is the general ſpirit of Moliere and his imitators. The moſt that can be ſaid in favour of theſe people, is, that they ſometimes render vice ridiculous, without inducing us to fall in love with virtue: They are people, ſays an ancient writer, who know well enough how to ſnuff a lamp, but never put oil into it.

See but in what manner he inverts the whole order of ſociety, to indulge himſelf in a vein of pleaſantry; how ſcandalouſly he ſtrikes even at the moſt ſacred ties by which that order is connected; how he laughs at the rights of fathers over their children, of huſbands over their wives, and maſters over their ſervants! He makes us laugh with him, it is true; but in this he incurs only greater blame, by forcing even philoſophers themſelves, by an invincible charm, to countenance raillery which deſerves their higheſt indignation. I hear it ſaid that he attacks vice; but I ſhould be glad to have a compariſon made between the vices he attacks, and thoſe he encourages. Which is the moſt blameable character? a vain blockhead of a citizen who ſets up for a fine gentleman, or the knaviſh fine gentleman who cheats him? In the performance, however, to which I allude, is not the latter the principal character? Are not the audience all intereſted in his favour? And is not the public applauſe laviſhly beſtowed on the ſeveral tricks he plays upon the other? Which, pray, is the moſt

moſt criminal? a clown who is fooliſh enough to marry a gay young lady, or a wife who endeavours to diſhonour her marriage-bed? What can be thought of a piece in which the pit applaud the deceit, infidelity, and impudence of the latter, and laugh at the ſtupidity of the former? It is undoubtedly a great vice to be covetous, and to lend out money on uſury; but is it not a greater crime for a ſon to rob his father, to behave rudely to him, to reproach, to inſult him; and, when his father is ſo incenſed as to beſtow his curſe upon him, to reply with a ſneer, that he will accept none of his preſents? Are the jokes leſs criminal for their being witty and pleaſing? And though the ſon, who throws out theſe jeſts, is rendered agreeable by the poet, do they afford a leſs dangerous leſſon of immorality?

I ſhall not ſtay to ſpeak of his valets; as they are condemned univerſally *; and it would be very unfair to charge on Moliere the errors of the times he lived in, or of thoſe he imitated, as he afterwards thought proper to correct himſelf. I would not take any advantage of the irregularities that are to be found in his juvenile performances, nor of thoſe particular paſſages which are leſs perfect than the reſt in his other plays:

* I do not affirm that they ought actually to be condemned. It is very poſſible they may be only the inſtruments of the wickedneſs of their maſters, ſince the latter have deprived them of the honour of invention. I much doubt, nevertheleſs, whether too exact a picture of ſociety in this particular, would have a good effect on the ſtage. On the ſuppoſition that ſome little knaviſh tricks were neceſſary to keep up the ſpirit of the play, I know not if it might not be better that ſervants alone ſhould be concerned in them, and that reputable people ſhould be people of probity, at leaſt upon the ſtage

plays: but would proceed at once to that which is allowed on all hands to be his maſter-piece; I mean, the Miſanthrope.

Of all Moliere's comedies, this is that which affords us the cleareſt inſight into the nature of his deſign in writing for the ſtage, and enables us beſt to judge of the real effects of his dramatic performances. As the firſt object was to pleaſe the public, he conſulted the general taſte of the people; on which he formed his plan, and according to this drew a contraſt between contrary failings; thence forming his characters, and interſperſing them throughout his plays. His deſign was not to draw a man of probity, but a man of the world: ſo that it is plain he did not want to correct vice, but folly; to which end, as I have already obſerved, he found vice to be a very proper inſtrument. Being determined, therefore, to expoſe to ridicule the ſeveral defects oppoſed to the qualifications of an agreeable and ſocial character, and having exhauſted his ſubjects, there remained for him only one ſpecies of the ridiculous on which to exerciſe his talent; this was the extravagance of virtue, an extravagance which is looked upon by the world as the moſt ridiculous of all; and this is what he has done in his Miſanthrope.

You cannot deny me two things: the one is, that Alceſtes in this play is deſcribed on the whole as an upright, ſincere, ingenuous, and worthy man; the other is, that the author has endeavoured to make his character appear ridiculous. This is ſufficient, in my opinion, to render Moliere inexcuſable. It may be objected indeed, that the object of the poet's ridicule

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is not the virtue of Alceſtes, but a real defect, his hatred of mankind. But it is not true that Alceſtes entertains any ſuch hatred: let not the reader be impoſed on by the mere name of miſanthrope, as if the character which bears it were an enemy to human-kind. Such an enmity would not be merely a defect, but a depravation of nature, and the greateſt of all vices: for all the ſocial virtues being reducible to benevolence, nothing can be more directly contrary to them than inhumanity. Could a real miſanthrope exiſt, he would indeed be a monſter, that would be ſo far from exciting our laughter, that he would fill us with horror. You poſſibly may have ſeen, at the Italian comedy, a piece entitled, *Life is a dream*; if you can recollect the character of the hero of that piece, there you have a real miſanthrope.

But what kind of a miſanthrope is Moliere's? An honeſt man, who hates the licentious manners of his age, and the profligacy of his contemporaries; a man who, out of a love to his fellow-creatures, deteſts the miſchief they do to each other, and the vices from which ſuch miſchief takes its riſe. Were he leſs affected with the failings of humanity, leſs irritated at the wickedneſs to which he is daily a witneſs, would he be himſelf the more humane? It might be as well pretended, that a tender and indulgent father loves other mens children better than his own, becauſe he is diſpleaſed at the faults of the latter, and is indifferent about thoſe of the former.

That this is the real character of Moliere's Miſanthrope is fully ſhewn, and his ſentiments ſufficiently explained, in the courſe of the play.

I own that he tells us he hath conceived an inveterate hatred againſt mankind: but on what occaſion is this ſaid? * Even at the very time when, juſtly incenſed at ſeeing his friend meanly ſpeak againſt his conſcience and deceive the man who aſks his advice, this friend is laughing at him in the midſt of his anger. It is very natural that ſuch a circumſtance ſhould aggravate his paſſion to exceſs; and cauſe him to ſay more than he would have done in cold blood. Beſides, the reaſon he gives for this univerſal hatred is a very good one;

——les uns, parce qu'ils ſont mechans;
Et les autres, pour etre aux mechans complaiſans †.

He is not an enemy to mankind, therefore, but to the villany of one part of them, and the countenance ſuch villany receives from the other. He would love the world well enough, if it contained neither knaves nor ſycophants. In this ſenſe every man of probity is a miſanthrope, or rather a real miſanthrope is a man of a different way of thinking: for in fact, I know not a greater enemy to mankind than he who is a friend to every body, and is pleaſed with every thing that is done. It is ſuch a man who gives conſtant

* The reader is deſired to take notice, that, having no books nor papers by me, but all my materials conſiſting of a confuſed recollection of obſervations formerly made at the theatre, I may poſſibly be miſtaken in my quotations and invert the order of his plays. But if my examples ſhould not prove ſo very accurate, my reaſons will not be the leſs juſt; as they are not deduced from this or that particular play, but from the general ſpirit of the theatre, which I have well ſtudied.

†——Some becauſe they are knaves,
And the others becauſe they are civil to knaves.

conſtant encouragement to knaves, and flatters thoſe vices which are productive of all the diſorders of ſociety.

A certain proof that Alceſtes is not a miſanthrope in the literal ſenſe of the word, is, that, with all his grumbling, he does not fail to intereſt and pleaſe us. None of the audience indeed would probably chuſe to reſemble him, becauſe ſuch rigid integrity is very troubleſome: but not one of them all would be averſe to the having connections with a man of his character, which ſhould never be the caſe were he a declared enemy to mankind. In all the other pieces of Moliere, the ridiculous perſonage is rendered odious or deſpicable: but in this, notwithſtanding Alceſtes has real foibles which we may laugh at very innocently, we yet feel ſuch a reſpect for him in our hearts, as it is not in our power to ſuppreſs. On this occaſion it is, that the force of virtue prevails over the art of the poet, and does honour to his character. Moliere, although he wrote ſome plays that are very exceptionable, was himſelf an honeſt man, and never could the pencil of an honeſt man be brought entirely to diſguiſe in odious colours the features of ſincerity and probity. To this it may be added, that Moliere hath put into the mouth of Alceſtes ſo many of his own maxims, that many perſons have thought he intended to draw it for his own character. This appeared from the concern evidently ſhewn by the pit, on the firſt night of repreſentation, on account of their not being of the miſanthrope's opinion with regard to the ſonnet; as it was very plain that it was the real opinion of the author.

This virtuous character, however, is exhibit-

ed as ridiculous: it is true, indeed, that in ſome reſpects he is ſo; and what ſufficiently ſhews the poet's deſign to make him appear ſo, is the contraſt which he hath made between the character of Alceſtes and that of his friend Philintes. This Philintes is the ſenſible man of the play: one of thoſe honeſt men in high life, whoſe maxims greatly reſemble thoſe of knaves: one of thoſe moderate men, who think things always go well, becauſe they are intereſted in their not going better; who are ſatisfied with every body, becauſe they care for no body; who maintain, round a plentiful table, that it is impoſſible the poor ſhould be ſtarving; and having their own pockets well lined, are very averſe to hear any advocate for poverty: one of thoſe who, if their own houſe were ſecure, would not give themſelves any trouble, though all the reſt of the world was ranſacked and plundered, maſſacred and deſtroyed; God Almighty having bleſſed them with an admirable ſhare of patience to ſupport the misfortunes of other people.

It is plain that ſo calm a reaſoner as Philintes, is a very proper perſon to work up the other to a ridiculous exceſs of paſſion; and the error of Moliere lies not ſo much in having given his miſanthrope a choleric diſpoſition, as for making him burſt into puerile fits of paſſion with regard to trifles which ought not to affect him. The character of the miſanthrope is not at the poet's diſpoſal, but is determined by the nature of his predominant paſſion. This is a fixed and violent hatred to vice, ariſing from an ardent love to virtue; and is conſtantly irritated by the iniquities of mankind. It is a paſſion, therefore, of which none but a great and noble

noble ſoul can be ſuſceptible. The contempt and horror, which it encourages alſo againſt the ſeveral vices by which it is irritated, ſerves to baniſh thoſe vices ſtill farther from an heart thus affected. Beſides, this continual contemplation on the diſorders of ſociety, detaches him of courſe from his own concerns, to intereſt him in thoſe of mankind in general. This habit elevates and ennobles his ideas, while at the ſame time it checks and deſtroys all thoſe mean inclinations which ariſe from ſelf-love; a concurrence of circumſtances which gives birth to a certain ſpecies of fortitude and generoſity of character, that make the mind diſdain to amuſe itſelf with ſentiments unworthy its attention.

Not but that man is ſtill man: paſſion often renders him weak, unjuſt, and unreaſonable: he looks too frequently into the private motives of the actions of others, with a ſecret pleaſure to ſee the inward corruption of their hearts: he is inflamed with paſſion at trifling evils; and an artful deſigning knave will often be able, by means of ſtudied provocation, to make him appear bad himſelf. It is, nevertheleſs, very certain, that this is not to be effected by any kind of methods but thoſe adapted peculiarly to his character: without this caution, it would be ſubſtituting another kind of man for the miſanthrope, and endeavouring to deſcribe him by features different from what are really his own.

Hence we ſee in what light the foibles of this character ſhould be exhibited, and alſo what Moliere hath made ſuch an admirable uſe of in all the ſcenes between Alceſtes and his friends, in which the dry maxims and railleries of the latter make him conſtantly throw out a num-

ber of impertinencies very oppoſite to the buſineſs of the ſcene. But this rigid and moroſe diſpoſition, which occaſionally gives him ſo much acrimony and bitterneſs, ſhould ſecure him at the ſame time from every puerile chagrin that hath no reaſonable foundation, and from diſplaying too ſtrongly any perſonal intereſt in things which ought not to affect him. Let him rail againſt the prevailing vices, while he is only a witneſs of them; this only adds an additional heightening to the portrait; but let him be calm with regard to injuries done to himſelf. For having declared open war againſt the vicious, he muſt expect they will declare it in their turn againſt him. If he did not foreſee the inconveniences his frankneſs would bring on him, it would be an abſurdity, and not a virtue.

Let a falſe woman deceive him; let his weak friends abandon him; he ought to bear it all without murmuring. He knows the world.

If theſe diſtinctions are juſt, Moliere hath not given the juſt likeneſs of a miſanthrope. And was this done through miſtake? Doubtleſs, not at all. But you ſee how far the deſire of raiſing a laugh at the expence of the character, hath obliged him to degrade it, contrary to the truth of the drama.

How comes it that, after the adventure of the ſonnet, Alceſtes does not expect the ill behaviour of Orontes? Why ſhould he be ſurpriſed when he is informed of it; as if it were the firſt time in his life that he had been open and ſincere, or the firſt time that his ſincerity had made him enemies! Ought he not to have calmly prepared himſelf for the loſs of his ſuit, inſtead of expreſſing a childiſh reſentment beforehand?

What

What a piece of puerile ſpite!

Ce ſont vingt mille francs qu'il m'en pourra couter;
Mais pour vingt mille francs j'aurai droit de peſter *.

The miſanthrope hath no need to purchaſe the privilege of railing at ſo dear a rate, he need only open his eyes and look about him; and he does not ſet ſuch a value on money as to imagine he hath acquired any new privilege by loſing his cauſe: but at all hazards the audience muſt be made to laugh.

In the ſcene with Dubois, the more reaſon Alceſtes hath to be angry, the more command he ſhould have over his temper, becauſe the ſtupidity of the ſervant is by no means a vice. The miſanthrope, and the paſſionate man, are two diſtinct and very different characters; and this was a very proper occaſion on which to diſtinguiſh them. Moliere could not be ignorant of it; but it was neceſſary, as before obſerved, to make the pit laugh.

At the riſk of making the reader alſo laugh at my expence, I will venture to accuſe this writer of having miſſed the opportunity of diſplaying his regard to truth, propriety, and perhaps beauty of character. To have done all this, he ſhould have made ſuch an alteration in his plot, that Philintes ſhould have been a neceſſary actor in the intricate part of the piece; while the actions of Philintes and Alceſtes might be ſet in contraſt with their principles, and in perfect

* It may coſt me twenty thouſand livres,
But for twenty thouſand livres I ſhall have a right to rail.

conformity to their characters. What I mean is, that the misanthrope should have been always enraged against public vices, and indifferent to the personal insults offered to himself. On the other hand, the philosophical Philintes ought to regard the vices of society with a stoical phlegm, and to be furiously resentful on the least injury done immediately to his own person. And indeed, I have remarked it as fact, that those people who are so easy in respect to acts of public injustice, are ever the most vociferous upon the least injustice done themselves; preserving their philosophy and temper only so long as they have no occasion to apply it to their own use. They resemble the Irishman, who would not rise from bed, though told the house was on fire. "What does it concern me? said "he, I am but a lodger." When the flames had reached his room, however, he began to bestir himself, and to think we ought sometimes to be interested in the safety of the house we live in, although we may be only lodgers.

It appears to me, that if Moliere had thus managed these two characters, each would have been more just and regular; and that of Alcestes, in particular, would have had a better effect: but in such a case, the audience could have laughed only at the man of the world; whereas the poet's design was for them to laugh at him who despised the world *.

It

* I doubt not that a man of genius might, on the plan here sketched out, draw a new misanthrope as just and as natural as the Athenian, of equal merit with that of Moliere, and incomparably more instructive. There is but one inconvenience to attend such a play; which is however an important one; it would be impossible for it to meet with success. For, say to

It is with the ſame view he introduces him in a ſcene of humour, in a manner quite inconſiſtent with a man of his character. Of this nature is the following conceit in the ſcene of the ſonnet:

La peſte de ta chute, empoiſonneur au diable!
En euſſes-tu fait une a te caſſer les nes †.

An expreſſion by ſo much the more inconſiſtent in coming from the miſanthrope, as he himſelf had cenſured ſome much better in the ſonnet of Orontes. It is alſo very extraordinary that the perſon who uſes it, propoſes the ſong of King Henry, but a moment afterwards, as a model of taſte. It is of no importance to object that this expreſſion comes from him when he is in a paſſion; for anger ſeldom inſpires conceits; and Alceſtes having been conſtantly a grumbler, ought even in his grumbling to aſſume a tone agreeable to his character.

Morbleu! vil complaiſant! vous louez des ſotiſes *.

Thus ſhould the miſanthrope have expreſſed himſelf, in a paſſion: after which no pointed conceit would ever have gone down. But the ſpectators muſt be made to laugh; and therefore virtue muſt be debaſed.

It is very remarkable that the heightenings, which the poet hath given the part of the miſanthrope, have obliged him to ſoften the eſſential ſtrokes of his character; ſo that, although in

what you pleaſe, nobody chuſes to have the laugh againſt himſelf. Thus we are led to recur to my firſt principles.

† Plague take thy fall, thou poiſoning devil!
Would thou hadſt received a fall that had broken thy noſe.

* Zounds! what a ſervile wretch, to praiſe ſuch nonſenſe!

in all his other plays the parts are overdone in order to produce a better effect, in this the features are deadened with a view to render the character the more ridiculous. This is evident by the very ſcene of which I have been treating. We there ſee Alceſtes uſing ſhifts and fetches, to inform Orontes of his opinion. But this is by no means conſiſtent with his character as a miſanthrope: he acts in this the part of a man of the world, who is yet honeſt enough to feel ſome reluctance in deceiving the perſon who conſults him. To act up to his character, he ſhould have bluntly ſaid to him, "Sir, your ſonnet is not worth a farthing; commit it to the flames." But this would have ſuperſeded the mirth ariſing from his apparent perplexity, and from his reiteration of, *I do not ſay that*, which in the main, however, is a falſehood. If Philintes, after his example, had ſaid to him on this occaſion, *What is it you ſay, traitor?* what anſwer would his frankneſs have made him! In truth, it is not worth while to be a miſanthrope by halves; for, if once the leaſt ſhifting and deviation from truth be allowed, what motive can he have to ſtop before he becomes as falſe and complaiſant as any courtier of them all?

The friend of Alceſtes ought alſo to have known him. How could he venture to propoſe his paying a viſit to the judges; that is, in plain terms, to ſtrive to bribe them? How could he ſuppoſe that a man, who neglects even the common forms of civility out of a love to virtue, ſhould be capable of neglecting his duty out of motives of intereſt? To ſeek to bribe a judge! It is not neceſſary a man ſhould be a miſanthrope, it is ſufficient that he is a man of common

mon honeſty, to deter him from attempting ſuch a thing. For what turn can be given to it? either the ſolicitor muſt do it to prevail on the judge to do his duty, in which caſe the offer is an affront; or he muſt propoſe a partial acceptation of perſons, and endeavour to ſeduce him. Now ſuch partiality is to the higheſt degree criminal in a judge; who ſhould take cognizance only of the fact, and not of the parties, but determine ſtrictly according to law. To induce a judge to commit a criminal action, is alſo the ſame as to commit it one's ſelf; and it is much better to loſe even a juſt cauſe, than to be guilty of a criminal action to gain it. This is clear, preciſe, and undeniable. I am not to learn that the morals of the world are founded on different maxims: but it is enough for me to ſhew, that wherever Moliere expoſes the miſanthrope to ridicule, the latter acts the part of a man of probity; and that his character was not ſufficiently developed, if his friend ſuppoſed him capable of acting otherwiſe.

If this maſterly writer ſometimes gives a full ſcope to this character, it is only when it ſerves to give a more theatrical colouring to the ſcene, and produces a more ſtriking contraſt or a more whimſical ſituation. Such, for example, is the ſullen taciturnity of Alceſtes, and the ſpirited cenſure of the converſation at the appartment of the coquette.

Allons, ferme, pouſſez, mes bons amis de cour *.

The author hath here ſtrongly marked the di-

* Come on, bravely, puſh on, my good courtly friends.

diſtinction between the calumniator and the miſanthrope. The latter, with all his gall and aſperity, abhors calumny, and deteſts ſatire. He attacks only public vices, and bad men in general. Private detraction he thinks ſo mean and low as to be altogether unworthy of him. He hates and deſpiſes it in others; and, if he ſpeaks ill of any body, he begins by ſaying it to their face. Thus he acts his part no where in the whole play ſo well as in this ſcene: becauſe he is here what he ought to be; and if he makes the pit laugh, a worthy auditor need not bluſh to join in their merriment.

It cannot be denied, however, in general, that if Alceſtes were more of a miſanthrope, his character would be much leſs entertaining: becauſe his reſolution and frankneſs, admitting of no turns or ſhifts, would never involve him in embarraſſments. It is not, therefore, out of regard to him that the author ſometimes ſoftens his character; on the contrary, it is done with a view to render him more ridiculous. There is alſo another reaſon for it, which is this; the miſanthrope of the theatre being to ſpeak of what he is an eye-witneſs of, muſt reſide in the midſt of ſociety, and of courſe muſt temper his manners and integrity with ſome little regard to thoſe peccadillos of falſehood and deception which conſtitute politeneſs, and which the world exacts from every one who is deſirous of ſtanding fair in it. Were he to behave otherwiſe, indeed, his diſcourſe would have no effect. The buſineſs of the writer is to repreſent him as ridiculous, not as a madman or a fool; and ſuch he would appear in the eyes of the public, if he were altogether a philoſopher.

It

It is difficult to lay aſide this admirable play, when once it is taken up. The more I examine it, the more I diſcover its beauties. But as, of all Moliere's plays, it is without contradiction the beſt in point of morals, we may from this form a judgment of the reſt; and muſt agree, that the author's deſign being to pleaſe a corrupted audience, either his moral hath a tendency to vice, or that the apparent virtue it recommends is for many reaſons more dangerous than vice itſelf. It is ſo, in that it is ſeductive, under the ſpecious garb of reaſon; in that it teaches us to prefer the cuſtoms and maxims of the world to ſtrict integrity; in that it makes wiſdom conſiſt in a certain medium between virtue and vice; and in that, to the great convenience of the audience, it inculcates, that in order to be an honeſt man, it is ſufficient not to be an arrant villain. I ſhould have too much the advantage in the argument, if, after the examination of Moliere, I ſhould proceed to criticiſe on his ſucceſſors; who have had neither his genius nor his honeſty, and yet have more ſteadily purſued the ſame intereſted views, making it their buſineſs to flatter the profligate youth and licentious women of the times. Theſe were the writers who firſt introduced thoſe groſs double entendres, no leſs contrary to good taſte than to good manners, which ſo long conſtituted the amuſement of bad company, embarraſſed modeſt perſons, and which a more polite mode of behaviour hath not as yet baniſhed from ſome of our provinces. There are other authors, more reſerved indeed in their expreſſions, who leave the former to amuſe abandoned women with obſcenity, and turn their thoughts to the

encouragement of cheats and pick-pockets. Regnard, who is one of the leaſt licentious among them, is however not the leaſt dangerous. It is incredible that the civil police ſhould permit a comedy to be acted in the midſt of Paris, in which is repreſented a dying uncle attended by his nephew, the worthy hero of the piece; who is employed all the while, with his comrades, in ſuch ſervices as the law uſually rewards with a halter; and inſtead of ſhedding tears, as a duty which mere humanity would require of ſtrangers on the like occaſion, is engaged in diſplaying his wit by throwing out barbarous jeſts on the ſolemnity of the ſcene. Here we ſee the moſt ſacred obligations, and the moſt affecting ſenſations of nature, expoſed to the wantonneſs of ridicule; and the moſt criminal acts are placed in ſuch a ludicrous light, as to make the whole paſs for wit and good-breeding. Inhumanity, forgery, fraud, theft, lying, are all practiſed and applauded in this ſcene. The ſuppoſed deceaſed thinking it convenient to revive, to the great mortification of his nephew, and refuſing to ratify what they had been doing in his name, his conſent is extorted from him by violence, and the whole concludes greatly to the ſatisfaction of the players and ſpectators; who, being involuntarily intereſted in the actions of theſe wretches, leave the theatre with the very ediſying reflection that they have in their hearts been accomplices to the crimes which they had ſeen committed.

Let us have fortitude enough to ſpeak without diſguiſe. Who is there among us that is certain he could ſit through a whole repreſentation of a play of this kind, without being made

a party, as it were, in the knaviſh tricks and expedients practiſed in it? Who is there that would not be a little diſpleaſed, if the thief ſhould happen to be detected or miſs his aim? And who would not for a moment become a thief himſelf, by being intereſted in, and wiſhing ſucceſs to the thief? For what is our being thus intereſted for him better than putting ourſelves in his place? An excellent ſchool this for youth, in which grown perſons find it ſo difficult to guard againſt the allurements of vice! Not that I mean by this, to inſinuate that villanous actions are never to be expoſed on the ſtage. But this I ſay, that, in order to introduce villanous characters there with propriety, it is requiſite the poet ſhould be a very honeſt man.

The faults are ſo inherent in our theatre, that we ſhould diſfigure it by endeavouring to correct them. Our modern authors, influenced by a better taſte, write more decent plays. But what is the conſequence? They have no humour, and are attended with hardly any ſucceſs. It is true, they are very moral and inſtructive; but they are equally dull and tedious. One might as well ſit to hear a ſermon.

The ſtage being in this ſtate of declenſion, our poets find themſelves under a neceſſity of ſubſtituting fallacious ornaments, calculated to impoſe on the multitude, inſtead of real beauties. Finding themſelves incapable of ſupporting the *vis comica*, and a juſt delineation of characters, they have enhanced the influence of the paſſion of love. The like hath been done in tragedy, in order to ſupply the want of incidents ariſing from political motives, which are no

longer conſidered as intereſting, and of thoſe ſimple and natural ſenſations, by which we are no longer affected. Rival authors vie with each other, for the ſake of public utility, to give new energy and colouring to this dangerous paſſion. Hence it is, that, ever ſince the time of Moliere and Corneille, nothing hath ſucceeded on the French ſtage but amorous romances under the title of dramatic pieces.

Love is the empire of the fair ſex. Here they muſt neceſſarily give law; becauſe, according to the order of nature, reſiſtance belongs to them, and the men cannot overcome that reſiſtance without giving up their liberty. The evident tendency of ſuch kind of entertainments, therefore, is to extend this empire of the ſex; to render women the governeſſes of the public, and to inveſt them with the ſame authority over the audience at a play-houſe, as they have over their lovers every where elſe. Can you imagine, Sir, that this inverſion of the order of things will be attended with no inconveniency; or that the extraordinary pains which are taken to augment the aſcendancy of the women, will cauſe the men to be better governed?

There may poſſibly be found in the world ſome few women, worthy of being conſulted by an honeſt man; but are the men to take counſel of the women in general? and is there no method of doing honour to their ſex without debaſing ours? I confeſs that a virtuous and lovely woman is the moſt charming object in nature; the moſt capable of affecting a ſuſceptible heart, and of leading it to virtue. But where is this celeſtial object concealed? Is it not cruel to amuſe us with the contemplation of ſuch raviſh-

ing

ing objects on the ſtage, to make us feel more ſeverely the diſappointment of finding them ſo very different in common life? The ſeducing picture, however, has its effect. The enchantment produced by theſe prodigies of female prudence, is turned to the advantage of the licentious part of the ſex.

The firſt ſtep which a youth, who knows the world only from the ſtage, takes towards virtue, is to go in ſearch of a miſtreſs to lead him the way, flattering himſelf that he ſhall find a Conſtantia or a Cenia † at leaſt. And thus, on the credit of an imaginary model, a modeſt air, and an affected ſoftneſs of behaviour, *neſcius auræ fallacis*, the ſilly youth runs on to deſtruction, while he conceives he is in the way of wiſdom.

This furniſhes me with an occaſion for propoſing a kind of problem. The ancients had, in general, a great regard for the fair ſex *: but

† It is not from inadvertence that I quote Cenia on this occaſion, although that agreeable performance was written by a lady. For, being a ſincere inquirer after truth, I conceal nothing that makes againſt me: and it is not this or that lady, but the generality of the ſex, whom I deny to have talents and abilities equal to ours. I honour the author of Cenia in particular the more readily, becauſe, having occaſion to cenſure ſome part of her work, the compliment I pay her appears thence ſincere and diſintereſted, as indeed are all thoſe which at any time flow from my pen.

* Thus they gave them ſeveral titles of honour, which are either obſolete, or are thought low among us. The uſe which Virgil made of the word *matres* on an occaſion wherein the Trojan mothers were not very prudent, is well known. We have no other word for it than *Dames*, which by no means is ſuitable to all ranks, and beſides is inſenſibly growing obſolete, and has been altogether baniſhed polite company. It is remarkable that the ancients were more inclined to take their titles of honour from the rights of nature, and that we derive ours from the privileges of rank.

they ſhewed it by keeping them from the public eye; and imagined they did honour to their modeſty, by being ſilent about their other virtues. It was a maxim with them, that the pureſt manners always prevailed in thoſe countries where the leaſt was ſaid of the women; and that ſhe muſt be the moſt virtuous who was leaſt the ſubject of converſation. On this principle it was, that a Lacedemonian, hearing a foreigner run on greatly in commendation of a lady of his acquaintance, angrily interrupted him, and aſked him if he would never have done depreciating a virtuous woman? Hence it was alſo, that, in the ancient comedies, the parts of women concerned in amours were generally given to ſlaves or common ſtrumpets. They entertained ſuch an idea of the modeſty of the ſex, that they would have concluded it a breach of decorum to have repreſented a woman of virtue on the public ſtage *. In a word, the picture of naked vice was leſs offenſive to them than an affront to modeſty.

With us, on the contrary, the women held in higheſt eſtimation are thoſe who make the moſt noiſe; who are the moſt talked of, the moſt frequently ſeen in public; who keep moſt company; who are the moſt poſitive, and give themſelves the moſt inſolent airs; who aſſign the due degrees and rewards to abilities, virtue, and merit: in fine, thoſe of whom the humble literati moſt ſervilely ſolicit protection. On the ſtage,

* If they neglected this rule in tragedy, it was becauſe, according to their ſyſtem of theatrical politics, they did not care if perſonages of a very high rank ſhould be thought to have no occaſion for modeſty; theſe forming always an exception to their rules of morality.

ſtage, it is ſtill worſe. In the world, the women, in fact, know nothing, though they take upon them to judge of every thing: but on the ſtage, thanks to the authors, they are made learned and philoſophical by the learning and philoſophy of the men; hence they foil us at our own weapons, while the fooliſh ſpectators go to learn of the women what they themſelves have learned of the men. All this is, in fact, making mere tools of them, and imputing to them a moſt childiſh vanity; at which I doubt not the more ſenſible of them conceive a juſt indignation. Turn over the greater part of our modern pieces; and you will find it is always a woman that is the moſt compleatly ſenſible, and takes upon her to inſtruct the men: it is always a fine lady teaching little John de Saintre his catechiſm. A child cannot eat a cruſt of bread, without it be cut by a governante. This is the true picture of all our new plays. My lady miſtreſs is on the ſtage, and the children are all in the pit. Not that I deny this method to have its advantages, and that ſuch preceptors are adapted to give due weight to their inſtructions: but to the point in hand; I ſhould be glad to know which of the two cuſtoms, that of the ancients or ours, redounds moſt to the honour of the fair ſex, and beſt demonſtrates the regard which is due to them.

The ſame cauſe which, both in our tragic and comic pieces, gives to women the aſcendant over the men, gives to youth alſo the ſuperiority of age; another inverſion of the natural order of things, no leſs reprehenſible. As the audience are always prepoſſeſſed in favour of lovers, it follows, that people advanced in years

can never play any but ſubordinate characters. Thus, either to form the intricacies of the plot, they ſerve as obſtacles to the inclinations of the young lovers, in which caſe they are odious; or they become amorous themſelves, and of courſe ridiculous. *Turpe ſenex miles.* In tragedy, they are repreſented as tyrants and uſurpers; and in comedy, as jealous, uſurious, pedantic, and ſordid old fellows, whom all the world conſpire to deceive. Such is the honourable light in which old age is repreſented at the theatre; and great muſt be the reſpect young people are hence taught to pay to it. Thanks to the celebrated author of Zara and Nanine, for having preſerved the venerable Luſignan and the good old Philip Humbert from this contempt. Some few other writers merit alſo the like acknowledgments; but will this ſuffice to ſtem the torrent of public prejudice, and to efface thoſe degrading impreſſions, which we have imbibed from moſt of our dramatic authors, of age, wiſdom, experience, and authority? Who can doubt that the habit of ſeeing old men conſtantly repreſented in odious colours on the ſtage, contributes to render them diſguſtful in ſociety; and that, by being uſed to confound thoſe we meet in the world, with the dotards and fondlewives of the ſtage, we deſpiſe them all alike?

Obſerve, at an aſſembly in Paris, the ſelf-ſufficent, vain, and inſolent behaviour of our young men; while the old are ſo timid and modeſt as hardly to put in a word, or if they venture to open their lips they hardly ever attract attention. Nothing like this is ſeen in the provinces, or in towns where they have no theatres: but, on the contrary, throughout every part of the world

world excepting great cities, grey hairs are held in veneration.

It will be ſaid, perhaps, that the old men at Paris contribute to make themſelves contemptible, by renouncing that gravity of carriage and demeanour which becomes their age, to aſſume the dreſs and manners of youth; and that it is but juſt, when they ſet up for gallants like young people, that the latter ſhould have the preference in their own profeſſion. But the ſtate of the caſe is quite different: it is, becauſe the old men have no other method to gain admittance into company, that they make uſe of this; being rather glad to recommend themſelves to ſociety by becoming ridiculous in it, than to be entirely excluded from it. For it is very certain that they are far from becoming really agreeable by affecting it, or that a gallant of ſixty can be a very engaging lover. He reaps ſome advantage, however, even from his inconſiſtency; as it is adding another triumph to a lady, who thinks the having a Neſtor in her train, a proof that even the coldneſs and indifference of age cannot withſtand the influence of her charms. It is for this reaſon the women encourage as much as poſſible theſe elders of Citherea, and are malicious enough to behave to the old fools as if they were amiable, when they would be found leſs agreeable if they were leſs extravagant. But to return to our ſubject.

Theſe are not the only effects which ariſe from the practice of deducing the intereſting part of the ſcene from the paſſion of love. There are many others imputed to this cauſe, much more ſerious and important; the reality of whoſe exiſtence I ſhall inquire into, altho' they have been

been frequently and forcibly alledged by our eccleſiaſtical writers. They have been anſwered indeed, by ſaying, that the dangers which might proceed from the ſeductive picture of a contagious paſſion, are perverted by the manner of exhibiting it: that the love repreſented on the ſtage is of the lawful kind, and its deſign virtuous; that it is often ſacrificed to duty and probity; and whenever it becomes criminal, meets with condign puniſhment. All this is very well: but is it not mighty pretty, thus to pretend to regulate the emotions of the heart by the dictates of reaſon, after thoſe emotions are actually excited; or to ſay, that we muſt wait for the cataſtrophe, to know what impreſſions we are to receive from the circumſtances producing it? The ſtage is cenſured, not becauſe it encourages criminal paſſion, but becauſe it encourages too great a ſenſibility; which is afterwards gratified at the expence of virtue. The tender emotions excited there, have no particular determinate object, but to cauſe a ſenſe of the want of ſuch object: it does not immediately inſpire love, but it prepares the heart for its reception: it does not direct it to any particular choice, but reduces it to the neceſſity of making a choice. And thus theſe emotions are rendered innocent or criminal from the uſe we make of them according to our natural diſpoſition or character; which is independent of the example repreſented. Were it even true that none but lawful paſſions are exhibited on the ſtage, would it thence follow that their impreſſions are leſs forcible, or their effects leſs pernicious? Is the lively image of an innocent affection leſs ſeductive, and leſs capable of moving

a ſuſceptible boſom, than the repreſentation of a criminal paſſion, againſt which a deteſtation of the vice may ſerve at leaſt as an antidote? But though the idea of innocence embelliſhes for a moment the ſentiment it accompanies, the circumſtances of it are preſently obliterated, while the impreſſion of ſo pleaſing, ſo delightful an emotion remains in the bottom of the heart.

The patrician Manilius was expelled the ſenate of Rome for having given his wife a kiſs in the preſence of his daughter; but to conſider the action ſimply and of itſelf, what was there reprehenſible in it? Indubitably nothing! it denoted even a commendable paſſion. But the chaſte affection of the mother might, nevertheleſs, excite unchaſte ideas in the daughter. It was, therefore, ſetting a corrupt example by a very virtuous action. Such are the effects of the moſt lawful amours exhibited on the ſtage.

Dramatic writers, it ſeems, pretend to cure us of love, by deſcribing its follies. But, whatever they may think, I find that the ſpectators conſtantly take part with the weak lover, and are frequently diſpleaſed that he is not ſtill more weak than he is. I aſk if this be a good way to avoid reſembling him?

You will pleaſe, Sir, to recollect a play, which I think I remember to have ſeen with you ſome years ago; and which gave us a pleaſure we little expected, either owing to the writer's having introduced more theatrical beauties than we imagined, or to the uncommon talents which the actreſs uſually diſplays. I mean the Berenice of Racine. In what diſpoſition of mind doth the ſpectator ſee this play open? In utter contempt for the weakneſs of a Roman emperor, whoſe

whoſe reſolution wavers between his miſtreſs and his duty, like one of the weakeſt of mortals; of a prince, who, fluctuating in a ſcandalous uncertainty, diſgraces by his effeminate complaints the almoſt divine character beſtowed on him by hiſtorians, and diſguſts us with the idea of the benefactor and delight of mankind, converted into a whining and deſpicable lover. But what doth the ſame ſpectator think of this character at dropping the curtain? He goes away lamenting the fate of the man he deſpiſed, eſpouſing his cauſe with reſpect to that very paſſion for which he before condemned him, and ſecretly murmuring at the ſacrifice he is compelled to make to the laws of his country. This is what we both experienced at the repreſentation of this play. The character of Titus, very well acted, would have had a good effect, had it been more worthy of him; but every body felt themſelves principally intereſted in the fortune of Berenice, and that the fate of her love determined the nature of the cataſtrophe. Not that her reiterated complaints excited any great emotion during the courſe of the play; but in the fifth act, when ſhe ceaſed her vociferous lamentations, and with a mournful air, and her voice quite ſpent, expreſſed herſelf in a dumb ſcene of ſorrow bordering on deſpair, the art of the actreſs adding to the pathos of the ſcene, the audience were ſo deeply affected as to burſt into tears, when thoſe of Berenice were dried up. What could be the motive of all this, except that they were afraid ſhe ſhould be ſent back, and anticipated in their own apprehenſions the ſorrow ſhe muſt afterwards feel? At the ſame time, there was not one of them but would

would have been glad if Titus had ſubmitted to the dictates of his paſſion, even at the riſk of his honour. We have here a moſt egregious inſtance of a tragedy, that anſwers the pretended end of theatrical inſtitutions, and teaches the ſpectators to ſurmount the weakneſs of love!

The cataſtrophe, it is true, is not agreeable to the ſecret inclination of the audience; but what is this to the purpoſe? The unravelling of the plot does not deſtroy the preceding effect of the piece. The queen goes off, without the permiſſion of the pit: the emperor ſends her back *invitus invitam*, and, I may add, *invito ſpectatore*. Titus may remain as much a Roman as he will, there is nobody takes part with him; the ſpectators have all married Berenice.

But were even this effect diſputable; were it even juſt to maintain, that the buſineſs of the play is conſtituted by the example of virtue and fortitude diſplayed by Titus in ſubduing his paſſion, and that this is the reaſon we compaſſionate Berenice, though we rejoice at the occaſion of it; theſe aſſertions would ſtill be coincident with my principles: becauſe, as I have elſewhere obſerved, the ſacrifices made to virtue and our duty have always a ſecret and powerful charm over corrupt minds; and this proves that the ſentiment in queſtion is not the effect of the play, but was inherent in the breaſts of the audience before it began. This laſt conſideration affords no argument, however, that the indulgence of certain paſſions would not appear in their eye ſtill preferable to virtue itſelf; or that, though they are well ſatisfied with bearing teſtimony to the virtue and fortitude of Titus, they would not be much better pleaſed to

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ſee him happy in the arms of Berenice; or at leaſt, that they would not be glad on ſuch terms to be in his ſituation.

To illuſtrate this point ſtill farther, we will form the idea of a plot totally different from that of Racine. We will ſuppoſe that Titus, after conſulting with himſelf, ſhould be unwilling either to violate the laws of his country, or to ſacrifice his happineſs to ambition; and therefore ſhould come, prepared by different maxims, to abdicate the empire, and lay his crown at the feet of Berenice; that this princeſs, ſtruck with ſo great a ſacrifice, ſhould think it her duty to refuſe the hand of her lover on thoſe terms, and yet ſhould at laſt accept of it; that the happy couple, tranſported with the charms of love, peace, and innocence, ſhould comply with the impulſe of nature, the ſource of all true joy, renouncing empty grandeur, and reſolving to live happy in obſcurity. Let us ſuppoſe, that this moving ſcene ſhould be animated with all thoſe tender and pathetic ſentiments which naturally ariſe from the ſubject, and which a Racine would have diſplayed to the greateſt advantage; that Titus, on his departure, ſhould take leave of the Romans in a ſpeech adapted to the circumſtances and occaſion; is it not evident, that the writer muſt be a ſad bungler indeed, if ſuch a ſpeech did not draw tears from the whole audience? I am ready to allow, that ſuch a concluſion would make the play leſs virtuous, leſs inſtructive, and leſs conformable to the truth of hiſtory; but would it afford leſs pleaſure and ſatisfaction to the ſpectators? The four firſt acts might ſtand nearly as they do at preſent, and yet would contain a very different

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leſſon. So certain it is, that love-ſcenes make a deeper impreſſion than the prudential declamations of wiſdom, and that the chief effect of a tragedy is altogether independent of its cataſtrophe.

To know whether it be leſs certain that tragedy, by exemplifying the fatal conſequences of immoderate paſſion, inſtructs us how to guard againſt them, we have only to appeal to experience. Theſe conſequences are no where more ſtrongly enforced than in Zara; they coſt the two lovers their lives, and Oroſmanes ſtill more than his life, becauſe he lays violent hands on himſelf, to get rid of the moſt cruel pangs that can torture the human mind, the remorſe ariſing from his having ſtabbed his miſtreſs. Theſe are, doubtleſs, very ſtriking leſſons! I ſhould be glad to find either man or woman, who could truly ſay they went home, after ſeeing Zara once acted, ſufficiently guarded againſt this fatal paſſion. For my own part, I think I hear the men all ſay to themſelves at the cloſe of the play; "Give me a Zara, and I warrant I'll take care not to kill her." If the women cannot forbear going in crowds to ſee this enchanting tragedy, I do not ſay it is with a view to take example of the heroine to beware of imitating a ſacrifice that ſucceeds ſo ill: but it is, becauſe, of all the tragedies repreſented on our theatre, there is none that diſplays the influence of love, and the power of beauty, to ſo great an advantage; and in which we learn, beſides, not to judge of a miſtreſs by appearances. Oroſmanes, it is true, ſacrifices Zara to his jealouſy: but a woman of any ſenſibility is not at all terrified at this tranſport of paſſion; conceiving

it greater misery to be slighted by the object of her love, than even to die by his hand.

Describe the effects of love in what manner you please, it will be a seductive description, or it will not be that of love. If it be ill-painted, the play is a bad one; if it be well, it makes us blind to every other passion or consideration. Opposition, misfortunes, and suffering, render it still more affecting, than if it met with no resistance. These affecting circumstances are so far from rendering it offensive to the spectators, that it becomes the more interesting to them. We are apt involuntarily to confess that so delicious a passion is of itself a sufficient consolation in every kind and degreee of distress. An image so tender insensibly melts the heart; we take a view of it only on that side which leads to pleasure, and turn our eyes from it when it begins to hurt us. No one thinks himself obliged to act the part of an hero; and thus we are seduced, by our admiration of a virtuous passion, to encourage inclinations that are criminal.

But what renders these images completely dangerous, is the very means that are taken to make them agreeable; it is because we never see this passion described on the stage except between persons of virtue: the two lovers are almost always models of perfection. And how is it possible not to be interested in the passion of two persons, whose natural character renders them so extremely engaging? I question if, among all our dramatic pieces, we shall find one in which mutual affection hath not obtained its favour of the audience. If any unfortunate lover should cherish a flame that meets no return,

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he is always the ſcorn and diſguſt of the pit. Dramatic writers think they effect great matters in making a lover amiable or odious, in proportion as he is ſucceſsful in his amours; in ſo managing it that the audience ſhall conſtantly approve of his miſtreſs's affections; and in giving to the tender paſſion as conſiderable an energy and influence as to virtue: Whereas they ought to teach young perſons to miſtruſt the allurements of love, to ſhun the errors of a blind paſſion which thinks itſelf ever founded on eſteem, and to be fearful of giving up a virtuous heart to an object unworthy of its affections.

I know not whether it is the miſanthrope or the hero of the piece that hath made a bad choice. To deſcribe the miſanthrope in love was doing nothing; the maſterly ſtroke was to make him in love with a coquette. The other women in the play are faultleſs creatures; one would imagine them to be all devotees. Is this a faithful picture of real life? Is this the way to awaken our ſuſpicions of a paſſion, which often proves ſo deſtructive to ingenuous minds? We are almoſt made to believe, truly, that a man of probity muſt needs be amorous; and that a woman who loves and is beloved, cannot fail of being virtuous. Excellent inſtructions theſe!

But once again; I do not take upon me abſolutely to determine whether it be right or wrong to make this paſſion the principal object of the play: but I ſay, that if the deſcription of its effects is in any caſe dangerous, it muſt be always ſo, however diſguiſed. I ſay farther, that it muſt be owing either to inſincerity or ignorance that we ever ſtrive to correct its impreſſions by others that are foreign to it, and which

never accompany it to the heart, or are preſently ſeparated from it; impreſſions which even diſguiſe the dangers of this deceitful ſentiment, and give it new attractions, by means of which it ruins thoſe who indulge it.

Whether the beſt form of dramatic pieces may be deduced from the nature of the ſtage in general; or whether we take a view of what the writers of a learned age and nation have done for the perfection of ours; I imagine we may juſtly conclude from theſe different conſiderations, that the moral effect of the ſtage can never be ſalutary in itſelf; ſince, in reckoning up only its advantages, we find them of no real utility equal to the inconveniences attending it. Now, in conſequence alone of this inutility, the ſtage, which can do nothing toward correcting our morals, may do a great deal toward corrupting them. By fomenting all our inclinations, it gives a new aſcendant to the ruling paſſions; and thus debilitates the mind by continual emotions, and makes us leſs capable of reſiſting them. In the mean time, the fruitleſs intereſt we take in the cauſe of virtue, ſerves only to flatter our ſelf-love without inducing us to be virtuous. Such of my fellow countrymen therefore, who do not diſapprove of theatrical amuſements in themſelves, are certainly wrong.

But beſide theſe effects of the theatre, which relate to the pieces repreſented, there are others, not leſs neceſſary, which relate immediately to the ſtage and the players. And it is to theſe the citizens of Geneva impute the taſte for luxury, dreſs, and diſſipation, which they fear, and very juſtly, to ſee introduced into their little republic. It is not only the converſation of the co-

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medians, but even the frequenting the theatre itſelf, that may produce this pernicious taſte, from the brilliant decorations and extravagant dreſs of the actors. Had a theatre indeed no other effect than that of interrupting the regular courſe of civil and domeſtic concerns, and of affording a conſtant retreat for idleneſs; it is impoſſible but that the conveniency of repairing daily to the ſame place to forget one's affairs, and beſtow one's attention on artificial amuſements, muſt inure a citizen to very different habits, and work a great alteration in his manners. Will theſe changes, now, be of ſervice or diſſervice to the community? This is a queſtion, whoſe determination depends leſs on an inquiry into the nature of the ſtage, than into the ſituation and character of the ſpectators. It is certain, that, in conſequence of the above-mentioned alterations, they would all in time nearly reſemble each other; it is therefore neceſſary to begin with their circumſtances at firſt ſetting out, to judge properly of the difference between them.

If theſe amuſements were even in their own nature indifferent, (and I am willing to conſider them ſo for a moment,) it is ſtill from the nature of the occupations interrupted by them that we are to judge whether they are good or bad; eſpecially when they are ſo engaging as to become occupations themſelves, and to give a reliſh for pleaſure inſtead of buſineſs.

It is politic to encourage the amuſements of thoſe whoſe occupations are injurious to ſociety, and to divert from amuſement ſuch whoſe occupations are of public utility. Another general remark is, that it is highly improper to permit an idle and corrupt people to make choice

of their own amuſements, leſt they ſhould only contrive or adopt ſuch as are agreeable to their vicious inclinations, and thus become as miſchievous in their pleaſures as they are in their ſerious deſigns. But a ſimple induſtrious people may be permitted to divert themſelves, after their day's work, in any manner they pleaſe; there is never any danger of their abuſing this liberty, nor is there any occaſion for much inquiry after objects ſuitable to their taſte. We have little need of ſauce, when our viands are ſeaſoned by abſtinence and keenneſs of appetite: neither is there any preparation required to divert thoſe who are almoſt exhauſted with fatigue, and to whom even reſt alone is an high enjoyment. In great cities, abounding with idle, intriguing people; who have neither religion nor honeſty; and whoſe imagination, vitiated by indolence, the love of pleaſure, and ſuperfluous neceſſities, breeds nothing but miſchief; in great cities where virtue and moral principle ſtand for nothing, becauſe individuals can eaſily conceal their vices, and are ſure to gain credit and reſpect by a ſuperiority of fortune: in ſuch cities, I ſay, the magiſtracy cannot be too ingenious in multiplying lawful entertainments; nor in ſtudying to make them agreeable, in order that private perſons may not be tempted to look out for more dangerous amuſements. To divert, and keep ſuch people from their deſtructive occupations, is to divert them from doing miſchief. The retrenching two hours a-day from the influence of vice, would prevent the twelfth part of the crimes that are committed; ſo that the time ſpent at the theatre, and in loitering about to coffee-houſes and other places

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of reſort for idlers and ſharpers, is an advantage to fathers of families, either in reſpect to the honour of their wives and daughters, or to their purſe.

But in ſmall cities and towns leſs populous, where individuals, being all under the public eye, are born as it were to be cenſors of each other, and where the police may eaſily take a view of the whole, contrary maxims are to be purſued. If the people are induſtrious, and are engaged in arts and manufactures, great care ſhould be taken not to eſtabliſh any amuſement which may divert the attention of avarice, which makes even toil a pleaſure, and enriches a ſtate by the covetouſneſs of its ſubjects. If the country be deſtitute of trade and manufactories, we ſhould be ſo far from giving encouragement to that indolent eaſy life to which the inhabitants are already but too much addicted, that we ought to render it irkſome to them, and thus compell them to take up with ſome occupation in which their time might be uſefully employed. I find at Paris, where every thing is judged of by appearances becauſe no one hath leiſure for examination, it is concluded from the ſtill and lifeleſs appearance which country-towns make at firſt ſight, that the inhabitants live together in a ſtupid inactivity, hardly ever emerging out of a ſtate of vegetation except to fight and quarrel. This is a miſtake, however, of which they might be cured, did they but conſider that moſt of the literati who figure at Paris, with moſt of our uſeful diſcoveries and inventions of all kinds, originally come from thoſe contemptible country towns. Make but a ſhort ſtay in ſome of them, where you at firſt imagined

gined you ſhould only meet with clowns and blockheads, and you will find not only people of much better ſenſe than your apiſh Pariſians; but will be almoſt ſure to find ſome ingenious and obſcure perſon, who will aſtoniſh you with his talents and performances; and who, while he is diſplaying ſuch prodigious efforts of labour, perſeverance, and induſtry, will conceive he is ſhewing you nothing but what is familiarly known at Paris. Such is the ſimplicity of real genius; it is never buſy nor intriguing; it neither knows nor cares for honours or preferment; it makes no compariſon between its own abilities and thoſe of others: but its reſources all centre in itſelf alone. Inſenſible of injuries, and almoſt inſenſible of praiſe, it never aſſumes its proper rank, but is put in poſſeſſion of it without boaſting. There is, doubtleſs, in proportion leſs noiſe and buſtle in country towns than in the metropolis. In the former, the paſſions are not ſo violent, nor our wants ſo urgent: but we there meet with more original characters, more invention and induſtry, and more real novelty; becauſe there are fewer imitators, from there being fewer models for imitation. Hence every man draws more from his own reſources, and puts more of his own deſign into all his performances: and this becauſe the mind, being leſs diverted and immerſed in vulgar opinions, is more freely agitated in ſolitude; and becauſe, by ſeeing leſs, people are led to imagine more; and, in fine, becauſe, being leſs urged for want of time, they have more leiſure to digeſt and extend their ideas.

I remember to have ſeen, in my youth, at Neufchatel, an object extremely pleaſing, and per-

perhaps the only one of its kind to be met with in the world. This was a mountain entirely covered with ruſtic habitations, each of which formed the centre of its adjacent lands; ſo that the houſes, being equally diſtant as the fortunes of the proprietors were equal, they afforded the numerous inhabitants at once the peace of ſolitude and the conſolations of ſociety. Theſe peaſants, happy and at their eaſe, free from taxes, impoſts, and oppreſſions, cultivated with all poſſible diligence the lands whoſe property and produce were their own; employing the time they can ſpare from huſbandry, in works of handicraft, and in making a proper uſe of that inventive genius which nature hath beſtowed on them. In the winter particularly, when the ſnows are frequently ſo deep as to deprive them of the conveniency of communication, each family is ſhut up in a little warm wooden houſe * of their own conſtructing; and are buſied in various amuſing exerciſes, which prevent their being weary of ſolitude, while at the ſame time they are conducive to health. They have no carpenters, lockſmiths, glaſiers, or turners, by trade among them; each family finds its artiſans in itſelf, who work for nobody elſe. And yet among the variety of convenient, and, I may add, elegant furniture with which their houſes are

* Some of our Pariſian witlings will no doubt exclaim at this, as well as at ſeveral other paſſages, and attempt to demonſtrate to the ladies (for it is to the ladies particularly that theſe gentlemen undertake to demonſtrate,) that it is impoſſible for a wooden houſe to keep out the cold. What a lying author is this! they will ſay; what a blunderer in natural philoſophy!——Their demonſtration I ſhall not pretend to controvert: but this I know, that the Swiſs are kept very warm in their wooden houſes, and that even in the depth of winter, when the country is covered with froſt and ſnow.

are furniſhed, every thing is conſtructed and finiſhed in a maſterly manner. They have leiſure alſo to invent and make many different implements in ſteel, wood, and paſteboard, which they diſpoſe of to foreigners, and export even to Paris; particularly thoſe little wooden clocks, which have been made by them, and have been ſent into different parts of Europe for ſome few years paſt. They conſtruct others alſo of iron, and even carry their ingenuity ſo far as to make watches; but what appears almoſt incredible, is, that every workman is himſelf capable of the ſeveral branches into which this buſineſs is uſually divided, and fabricates all the different tools himſelf.

Nor is this all. They are poſſeſſed of uſeful books, are tolerably inſtructed in them, and reaſon ſenſibly on moſt ſubjects *. They make cranes, magnets, ſpectacles, pumps, weather-glaſſes, and camera-obſcuras. Their apartments are hung round with various kinds of inſtruments; ſo that you would take the ſtove of a peaſant for the workſhop of a mechanic, or for the cabinet of ſome experimentaliſt. They all know ſomething alſo of drawing, painting, and arithmetic. Moſt of them play on the flute, and many know a little of muſic, and ſing juſtly. Theſe arts are not taught them by profeſſed maſters, but are handed down as it were by tradition. Of thoſe whom I knew acquainted with muſic,

* I might cite, as an example, a man of merit well known in Paris, and more than once honoured with the ſuffrage of the academy of ſciences. This is Mr. Rivaz, a celebrated Valeſian. I know indeed that he has few equals among his countrymen; but this I know, that it was in living like them that he learned to excel them.

muſic, one of them told me he had learned it of his father, another of his aunt, and a third of his couſin, while others did not remember of whom. One of their moſt common amuſements, is to ſing pſalms in four parts, with their wives and children; when one is aſtoniſhed to hear from their ruſtic habitations the nervous and manly harmony of Goudimel, ſo long ſince forgotten by our ſcientific artiſts.

I could be no more weary of rambling among thoſe delightful villas, than were the honeſt inhabitants of treating me with frankneſs and hoſpitality. Unfortunately I was then but young; my curioſity was only that of a child, and I ſought of courſe more to amuſe than inſtruct myſelf.

Thirty years having ſince elapſed, the few obſervations I then made have ſlipped my memory. I remember only that I conſtantly admired, in thoſe extraordinary people, a certain mixture of artifice and ſimplicity, which one would think incompatible, and which I have never obſerved in any other. But I remember nothing in particular of their manners, ſociety, or character. At preſent I ſhould regard this happy ſpot with a different eye; and yet may never ſee it more, though, alas! it is in the way to my native country!

Having given this ſlight ſketch of the nature and ſituation of the place, we will ſuppoſe that a theatre was erected at a ſmall expence on the top of the mountain, and in the midſt of the habitations, we have been ſpeaking of; with the view of affording a decent entertainment for a people conſtantly employed, and able to ſupport the expence: let us ſuppoſe farther, that

theſe people ſhould contract a liking for ſuch entertainment; and then let us inquire what would be the reſult of ſuch an inſtitution. The firſt inconvenience that preſents itſelf is, that the occupation of theſe people ceaſing to be their amuſement, as ſoon as they have got another they will be diſguſted with the former: hence their induſtry will not furniſh them with their former leiſure, nor with the ſame inventions. Beſides, there will be every day ſo much time loſt by all thoſe who go to the play; who will hardly return immediately to their work, with their heads full of what they have been ſeeing at the theatre, and of which they will continue to talk and ruminate. Hence will ariſe a decreaſe of labour, the firſt ill conſequence.

However little they pay at entrance, it muſt ſtill be ſomething. Here is an expence they have not been at before. They muſt pay alſo for their wives and children, when they take them thither, as of courſe they ſometimes will. Add to this, that a man cannot go to a public aſſembly in his working dreſs: he will hence be obliged to put on his Sunday-clothes, to change his linen, and to be ſhaved and powdered more frequently: all which will coſt him both money and time. Here we have an increaſe of expences; the ſecond ill conſequence.

An additional expence and diminiſhed labour muſt have ſome means of indemnification. This will be found only in the price of labour, which of courſe will raiſe the price of their commodities. The traders, diſguſted at this riſe, will leave theſe *mountaineers* *, and provide themſelves

* So the inhabitants of the abovementioned mountain are called.

ſelves with the like commodities from their neighbours, who, without being grown leſs induſtrious, ſhould have no theatre, and therefore would not have the ſame reaſon to raiſe the price of their goods. Hence decreaſe of trade, a third ill conſequence.

In bad weather the roads are impaſſable; but the comedians muſt live in all weathers, their repreſentation therefore muſt not be interrupted. The playhouſe muſt of courſe then be acceſſible at all ſeaſons. In the winter, roads muſt be opened through the ſnow; poſſibly they will be paved, and, God forgives us, perhaps lighted. Here ariſes a public expence; and conſequently there muſt be a tax laid upon individuals to diſcharge it. Hence the eſtabliſhment of taxes, a fourth ill conſequence.

The wives of our mountaineers, going firſt to ſee and afterwards to be ſeen, muſt be dreſſed out, and that with marks of diſtinction. The Squire's lady will not be ſeen at a play, in the ſame attire as the wife of a ſchoolmaſter; while the latter will endeavour to make as good an appearance as the former. Hence will ſoon ariſe an emulation in dreſs, which will ruin their huſbands, and perhaps infect them with the ſame ſpirit, while every expedient will be thought of to evade the reſtraint of ſumptuary laws. Hence the introduction of luxury, a fifth ill conſequence.

What follows is eaſy to be conceived: without placing to account, therefore, the other inconveniencies which I already have, or hereafter ſhall mention; without examining into the nature of theatrical entertainments, or the morality of their effects; I confine myſelf entirely to the

articles of labour and profit: and I conceive I have proved, by a ſimple deduction of conſequences, how a people, who live eaſy and happy, while they owe that eaſe and happineſs to their induſtry, haſten their own deſtruction when they exchange reality for appearance, and precipitate themſelves into luxury.

By the way, you are not to object that my ſuppoſition is chimerical. I lay it down as ſuch, endeavouring only to render its inevitable conſequences more or leſs perceptible. A few circumſtances excepted, there are other mountaineers, beſides thoſe I have deſcribed; and the example is, *mutatis mutandis*, very generally applicable.

Thus, were it even true that theatrical entertainments are not bad in themſelves, we are yet to inquire whether they may not become ſo with regard to any particular people for whom they are intended. In ſome places they may be uſeful to attract foreigners; to increaſe the circulation of ſpecie; to afford encouragement to artiſts; to diverſity modes of dreſs; to amuſe the rich, or thoſe who aſpire to become ſo; to render them leſs hurtful to ſociety; to divert the poorer ſort from thinking on their miſery; to make them forget the demerit of their chiefs, by attending to that of dancers; to maintain a kind of taſte, when real virtue is no more; to hide the deformity of vice with the varniſh of decorum; and, in a word, to prevent a corruption of manners from degenerating into flagrant licentiouſneſs. In other places, however, they would tend to ſuppreſs the love of labour; to diſcourage induſtry; to ruin individuals; to infect them with idleneſs; to ſet them on looking out for means

means of ſubſiſtence without working; to render the common people indolent and mean; to divert their attention from thoſe public and private concerns which ought to employ their thoughts; to turn prudence into ridicule; to ſubſtitute a theatrical jargon in the place of virtue; to place all their morality in metaphyſics; to convert ſober citizens into rattling wits, their modeſt wives into fine ladies, and their daughters into amorous coquettes. The general effect would be the ſame on all men; but men thus perverted would be more or leſs proper for their ſituation and country. In becoming equal, the bad would be gainers; but the good would be ſtill greater loſers: both of them would contract a taſte for indolence and effeminacy; which would deprive the one of great virtues, and preſerve the other from attempting great crimes.

From theſe new reflections we may infer a conſequence directly contrary to that which I drew from the former; viz. that when a people are corrupted, playhouſes are good for them; and that when the people are uncorrupted, playhouſes are bad. It ſhould ſeem, therefore, that theſe two contrary effects counteracting each other, dramatic entertainments ſhould be found indifferent to all. But there is this difference, that the effect which inforces both the good and the evil, is deduced from the ſpirit and tendency of the particular performance itſelf; it is ſubject, like them, to a thouſand modifications that reduce it in a manner to nothing; whereas that effect which converts the good into evil, and the evil into good, reſults from the very inſtitution itſelf; and is a conſtant and real effect,

which is daily renewed, and muſt in the end prevail.

It follows hence, that, in order to judge whether it be proper or not to eſtabliſh a theatre in any place, it is firſt of all neceſſary to know whether the inhabitants of it are virtuous or vicious in their manners; a queſtion it by no means becomes me to decide, in reſpect to my fellow-citizens. Be this however as it may, all the conceſſion I am able to make on this head, is, that a playhouſe will do us no kind of harm, if we are already ſo far gone that nothing elſe will.

To prevent the inconveniencies that might ariſe from the example of the comedians, you would compel them to be honeſt people. By this means, you ſay, we ſhould have theatrical entertainments and virtuous manners; and be able to unite the advantages of both. Theatrical entertainments and virtuous manners! This would indeed be a ſight, eſpecially as it would be the firſt time it had ever been ſeen! But what are the means you point out, for keeping the players in due bounds? Severe laws well executed. This is at leaſt a confeſſion that they ſtand in need of reſtraint, and that the method is not eaſy. Severe laws! Our very firſt law is to admit of no ſuch people. If we ſhould once break through that, what will avail the ſeverity of others? Laws well executed! ſay you? It is firſt neceſſary to know if ſuch laws could be ſo; for the force of the laws hath its bounds as well as the vices they are intended to reſtrain. We cannot be certain of executing the laws, till we have compared theſe two quantities and find that the former exceeds the latter. The knowledge

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of theſe two relations conſtitutes the real ſcience of the legiſlator; for, if he had nothing more to do than to publiſh edicts upon edicts, and regulations upon regulations, in order to remedy abuſes as faſt as they riſe, he might doubtleſs compoſe many fine pieces; but they would, for the moſt part, remain ineffectual, and would ſerve rather as indications of what ought to be done, than as the means of putting it in execution. In reality, the inſtitution of laws is not ſo wonderful an enterpriſe, but that almoſt any man, of common ſenſe and common honeſty, might preſcribe ſuch inſtitutions as, properly obſerved, would be of the greateſt benefit to ſociety. Shew me any under-graduate of a civilian, who cannot draw up a code as morally pure as that of Plato's imaginary republic. But this is not the only point to be aimed at. The main buſineſs is to adapt this code in ſuch a manner to the people for whom it is framed, and to the particular injunctions therein contained, that the execution of it ſhould be the natural reſult of its inſtitution. This would be impoſing laws on a people, after the example of Solon, not indeed ſuch laws as might be abſolutely beſt in themſelves, but ſuch as are relatively beſt adapted to a people in their particular circumſtances. It is, otherwiſe, much better that diſorders ſhould continue, than be provided againſt by laws which are not to be obſerved; for this, without removing the evil, is the way to bring the law itſelf into contempt.

Another obſervation not leſs important, is, that affairs of morals and equity in general are not regulated, like thoſe of particular juſtice and ſtrict right, by laws and edicts: or, if the laws

have at any times an influence on manners, it is when they themſelves firſt derive that influence in a great meaſure from them; in which caſe they return it, by a kind of reaction well known to real politicians. The firſt act of authority done by the Ephori of Sparta, on entering upon the office, was to iſſue a proclamation to enjoin the people not merely to obſerve the laws, but to love them; in order that their obſervance might be eſteemed no hardſhip. This proclamation, which was not a matter of form, perfectly ſhewed the ſpirit of the Spartan inſtitution; by which a regard to the laws and to manners were intimately connected in the minds of the citizens. But let us not flatter ourſelves with ever ſeeing Sparta revive in the midſt of commerce and a love of gain. Had we the ſame maxims indeed as the Lacedemonians, a playhouſe might be very ſafely erected at Geneva; for none of its citizens would reſort thither.

By what means then can government have an influence on manners? I anſwer, By public opinion. If our habits ariſe from our own ſentiments when we live in retirement, they ariſe from the ſentiments of others when we mix in ſociety. When we live not by ourſelves, but chiefly with others, it is by the opinion of others that we are governed. Nothing appears ſalutary or eligible to individuals but what is adjudged ſo by the public; the only happineſs which is known to the greater part of mankind being that of being thought happy.

With reſpect to the choice of neceſſary means to direct the public opinion; this is another queſtion, which it would be ſuperfluous to reſolve for you, and this is not the place in which

to

to reſolve it for my readers in general. I ſhall content myſelf, therefore, with ſhewing, by a very ſtriking inſtance, that ſuch means are neither laws nor penalties, nor indeed any kind of compulſive methods. There is an example juſt under your eye; for I borrow it from your own country; I mean, the tribunal of the marſhals of France, who are appointed ſupreme judges of the point of honour.

What was the intent of this inſtitution? To change the public opinion in reſpect to duels; to the reparation of injuries and to thoſe occaſions in which a brave man is obliged, on pain of infamy, to demand ſatisfaction by his ſword.

It follows hence, in the firſt place, that compulſion having no power over the judgment, the greateſt care ſhould be taken to baniſh every the leaſt appearance of violence from a tribunal inſtituted to effect ſuch a change. Even the term *tribunal* was an improper one; that of the *court of honour* would, I think, have been much better. Its only arms ought to be honour and infamy: there ſhould be no pecuniary rewards, no corporal puniſhment, no priſons, no arreſts, no guards belonging to it. A beadle ſhould cite the accuſed to appear, by ſimply touching him with a white wand; without any other conſtraint to force an appearance. Not to appear indeed before the judges within a certain time after citation, ſhould be taken as a confeſſion that the perſon cited had no honour, and of courſe ſhould incur their condemnation. Hence ſhould reſult proper marks of infamy, ſuch as a degradation from nobility, an incapacity to ſerve the king in any office civil or military, with other puniſhments of the ſame kind, which naturally depend

depend on and take their riſe from opinion.

It follows, ſecondly, that, in order to eradicate public prepoſſeſſion, there ſhould be appointed judges of great influence and authority reſpecting the matter in queſtion: and as to this particular, it is certain the founder entered properly into the ſpirit of the inſtitution: for in a military nation none can be better judges of the proper occaſions for ſhewing courage, or of demanding ſatisfaction for inſulted honour, than veterans rewarded by military titles, grown grey beneath their laurels, and who have ſo often ſhewn at the expence of their blood, that they are not ignorant when their duty requires it to be ſhed.

It follows, in the third place, that, as nothing is more independent on the ſupreme power than public opinion, the ſovereign ought to be careful, above all things, not to ſuffer his arbitrary deciſions to interfere with the decrees paſſed to repreſent, or to direct, that opinion. On the contrary, he ought to endeavour to raiſe the court of honour above his throne; as being himſelf ſubject to its venerable decrees. He ſhould not have begun, therefore, with the condemnation of all duels indiſcriminately. This was ſetting up a ſhocking oppoſition at once between honour and the law; for not the law itſelf can oblige any one to be guilty of his own diſhonour. If the public are of opinion that any particular man is a poltroon or a coward, it will be in vain for the king with all his authority to declare him brave. Nobody will believe a word of it: and ſuch a man, who, being generally deſpiſed as a coward, ſhould thus want to be reſpected on compulſion, would only be thought the more contemptible. As to what is ſaid in the edicts,

edicts, that duels are offences againſt the Deity; this is doubtleſs a very pious opinion: but the civil magiſtrate is no judge of ſpiritual concerns; whereas, whenever the ſovereign authority offers to interpoſe in diſputes between honour and religion, it runs in danger of expoſing itſelf on both ſides. Nor do theſe edicts reaſon a jot better, when they ſay, that, inſtead of fighting, the parties aggrieved ſhould addreſs themſelves to the marſhals: for to condemn thus all duels without diſtinction or reſerve, is to begin with previouſly determining what is referred to their judgment. It is well known the marſhals are not authorized to allow of a duel, even in caſes where offended honour has no other means of ſatisfaction; and, according to the prejudices of the world, many ſuch caſes may happen: for as to the mere ceremonious ſatisfaction offered to the perſon injured, this is only child's play.

We will ſuppoſe a man hath a right to accept of ſuch reparation on his own account, and to forgive his enemy on ſubmiſſion: an artful management of this maxim might inſenſibly prevail over the barbarous prejudices it oppoſes. But the caſe is different when the honour of others is attacked, with whom he is connected; here is no poſſibility of accommodation. If my father has received a box on the ear; if my ſiſter, my wife, or my miſtreſs, be inſulted, ſhall I preſerve my own honour by proſtituting theirs? No marſhals, no accommodations, will ſuffice: I muſt either avenge my friends, or be myſelf diſhonoured; the edicts leave no other choice but puniſhment or infamy. To cite an example that makes for my preſent purpoſe; is it not a ſingular kind of contraſt between the ſpirit of our thea-

theatres and that of our courts of juſtice, that the ſame people ſhould applaud that very Cid on the ſtage, who would be hanged at the Greve?

We may do what we pleaſe, but, till ſome expedient be found to change the public opinion, neither reaſon, nor virtue, nor the laws, will prevail over it. Compulſion, I ſay again, will not do; nor would the method at preſent preſcribed be of any other uſe, were it practiſed, than to puniſh brave men, and encourage cowards: but fortunately it is too abſurd to be uſed, and hath ſerved only to change the name of duels. What then, you will ſay, ſhould have been done? It appears to me, that ſingle combats ought to have been cognizable by the juriſdiction of the marſhals; who ſhould have judged of the caſe, and prevented, or even have permitted, them as they found cauſe. The marſhals ſhould not only have been inveſted with authority to grant the liberty of fighting, when they judged it expedient; but it would have been of conſequence for them to have made actual uſe of this authority; were it for no other reaſon than to obviate a common notion, which it is not eaſy to ſuppreſs, and alone ſubverts their whole authority, *viz.* that in matters which come before their court, they determine leſs according to their own opinion, than according to the orders of the ſovereign. But then there would be no ſcandal in demanding leave to fight on a neceſſary occaſion; nor would there be any ſhame in declining to fight, when the reaſons for granting leave were deemed inſufficient. It would be always, however, a ſhame to ſay to to them, "I have been inſulted; pray, contrive ſome method to excuſe me from fighting." By

ſuch

ſuch means all private challenges would infallibly be diſcountenanced; when, offended honour being at liberty to defend itſelf, and courage to diſplay itſelf, in the field of honour, thoſe perſons would be juſtly ſuſpected of bad deſigns who fought in private; and when thoſe whom the court of honour had judged to have fought wrongfully * ſhould be tried as aſſaſſins by the ordinary courts of juſtice. I own, that as many duels would not be adjudged till too late, and others would be ſolemnly permitted, this inſtitution would be attended, in the beginning, with the loſs of many brave men; but it would conduce afterward to the ſaving a prodgiious number of lives; whereas, from the effuſion of the blood ſpilt in defiance of the king's edicts, there ariſes a motive for ſpilling ſtill more.

To proceed to the conſequences afterwards. In proportion as the Court of Honour, by its prudential deciſions, ſhould acquire an influence over popular opinions, it would grow by degrees more ſevere, till the juſt occaſions for fighting were reduced to none at all: in which caſe the point of honour would be altered in its principles, and duels would he entirely aboliſhed. So much trouble hath been taken indeed; and the conſequence is, the preſent inſtitutions to this end are uſeleſs. If duels are not ſo frequent in our days, it is not that they are either deſpiſed or puniſhed, but becauſe there hath been a revolution of manners †: at the ſame time,

* I ſay *wrongfully*, by which I mean not only unfairly or cowardly, but alſo unjuſtly, and without ſufficient reaſon; which would be juſtly preſumed of every affair that ſhould not be brought before the court.

† People uſed formerly to quarrel in the public taverns: they have

time, it is a ſtrong proof that this revolution ariſes from quite different cauſes, in which the government has no concern; and that the public opinion is by no means changed reſpecting this article; for, after all theſe ill-judged precautions, a gentleman who is inſulted, and does not demand ſatisfaction at the point of his ſword, is ſtill as infamous as ever.

A fourth conſequence of the ſame inſtitution is, that, as no gentleman can paſs through life without honour, all ranks of people that wear a ſword, even from the prince to the foot-ſoldier, and even all who do not wear ſwords, ſhould be ſubject to the juriſdiction of this court; ſome to account for their conduct and behaviour, others of their principles and converſation; all being equally liable to be honoured or diſgraced, according as their lives and opinions ſhould be agreeable or diſagreeable to the principles of national honour, which would be thus inſenſibly reformed by the tribunal in queſtion conformably to thoſe of reaſon and juſtice. To confine the juriſdiction of ſuch courts to the nobility and gentlemen of the army, is to lop off the branches and leave the trunk; for, if the point of honour makes gentlemen act, it makes the people talk: the former fight only becauſe the latter would con-

have now taken a diſguſt at this coarſe and vulgar pleaſure, by finding a more eaſy acceſs to private families. Formerly the men would cut one another's throat for a miſtreſs: they have ſince diſcovered, by living in greater familiarity with the ſex, that it is not worth while to fight about them. If we except women and wine, there are few ſubjects for quarrel. At preſent, few people fight about any thing but gaming. The gentlemen of the army fight for court-favours, or to prevent their quitting the ſervice. In this age of calculation, every man may eſtimate the value of his honour and life within half a crown.

condemn them if they did not: now, to change those actions which have the public esteem for their object, it is first necessary to effect a change in the judgment of the public concerning them. I am convinced indeed, that this change will never be effected without consulting even the women, on whom depends in a great measure the mode of thinking among the men.

It follows also from this principle, that the tribunal we are speaking of should be more or less formidable to different orders of men, in proportion as they have more or less honour to lose according to the general notions of the world; for by these must we in this case ever be governed. If the institution were properly founded, princes and peers would tremble at the name of a Court of Honour. On the first erecting of this tribunal, all the private quarrels subsisting among the nobility of the kingdom should be referred to its decision; the judges passing sentence, as far as possible, agreeable to the laws of honour only. These sentences should be severe; such as cessions of rank and precedency; and those personal, and independent of the privilege of place. There should be issued prohibitions to wear arms, to appear in the presence of the prince, or some such penalties as are nothing in reality but only imaginary punishments, even down to actual infamy; which might be looked upon as the capital punishment of this court of honour. All these penalties should have the same effect, by the concurrence of the supreme authority, as the public judgement hath when its determinations are not counteracted by force.

The court ſhould not take cognizance of trifles, nor ever do things imperfectly: even the king himſelf ſhould have been ſummoned before it, when he threw his cane out of the window, for fear, as he ſaid, of being provoked to ſtrike a gentleman *. Both parties ſhould have been cited to appear in court: the king ſhould have been ſolemnly tried, and ſentenced to make the gentleman reparation for the affront indirectly offered him; at the ſame time, the court ſhould award an honourable prize to the Monarch, for having moderated his paſſion. This prize ſhould be ſomething ſimple, but conſpicuous, for the king to wear during life; which would, in my opinion, be a more honourable mark of diſtinction than any attached to royalty, and would, doubtleſs, be a frequent ſubject for the muſe.

It is certain, that, with reſpect to honour, kings themſelves are particularly ſubjected to public judgment, and conſequently may, without debaſing themſelves, appear before the court that repreſents it. Lewis XIV. was a proper perſon to have formed an inſtitution of this kind, and I believe would have done it had it been ſuggeſted to him.

And yet, with all theſe precautions, it is ſtill doubtful whether ſuch an eſtabliſhment would ſucceed, becauſe it is contrary to the ſpirit of the monarchical government. Certain it is, nevertheleſs, that by neglecting ſome ſuch means, and by attempting to introduce legal compulſion in matters of prejudice, and to alter the public notions of honour by violence, the royal authority

* Mr de Lauzun. Here I think the cane was nobly applied.

rity hath been frequently endangered, and the laws rendered contemptible for attempting to exceed their power. What was the opinion, however, which they wanted to deſtroy? Certainly the moſt extravagant and barbarous opinion that ever entered the human mind; *viz.* that every ſocial duty is ſupported by courage; that no man is a knave, a ſcoundrel, or a calumniator, but on the contrary every one polite, humane and honeſt, that dares to fight; that falſehood is converted into truth, robbery rendered lawful, treachery commendable, and all kinds of villany honourable, when they can be defended by the ſword; that an injury is ſufficiently repaired by a thruſt through the lungs; and that we are never in the wrong in our quarrels with others, provided we fight and kill them. I confeſs there is another ſpecies of fighting, wherein cruelty is mixed with politeneſs; this is when people fight in the firſt heat of blood. In the firſt heat of blood! Good God! Why, thou ſavage beaſt, doſt thou thirſt after another's blood? Wouldeſt thou drink it? It is impoſſible to reflect on theſe horrid circumſtances without ſhuddering. Such are the prejudices which the kings of France, armed with all the public force, have attacked in vain. Opinion, the queen of the world, is not ſubject to the power of kings; who are themſelves the firſt of ſlaves.

But I finiſh here this long digreſſion; which unfortunately will not be the laſt: and from this example, perhaps too brilliant, *ſi parva licet componere magnis*, I return to more ſimple applications. One of the infallible effects of a theatre eſtabliſhed in ſuch a ſmall city as ours,

would be to change our maxims, or, if you will, our public prejudices and opinions: this would effect a neceſſary change in our manners; whether for the better or worſe I pretend not to ſay, but certainly leſs agreeable to our conſtitution. I aſk, Sir, by what laws you would effectually remedy this inconvenience? If government hath a great influence on manners, it is only by means of its primitive inſtitution; when it hath once formed thoſe manners, it has no longer the power to alter them, unleſs it alters itſelf; on the contrary, it hath even a great deal of trouble to preſerve them againſt the inevitable accidents by which they are conſtantly attacked, and againſt their natural propenſity to change. Public opinions, although ſo difficult to be influenced, and yet in themſelves of a very unſtable and changeable nature. A thouſand fortuitous cauſes and unforeſeen circumſtances, will effect what neither argument nor force are capable of; or rather it is preciſely becauſe they are directed by chance, that compulſion hath no influence on them: juſt as in throwing dice, throw the box with what force you will, it will not in the leaſt contribute to turn up the caſt required.

The utmoſt that human wiſdom is capable of, is to prevent alterations, and to put a check by way of prevention to whatever tends that way; but we no ſooner permit ſuch changes than we authoriſe them, and are ſeldom able to determine their effects, nor can ever anſwer for what they will be. How ſhall we prevent thoſe effects, therefore, whoſe cauſe we have introduced voluntarily? Would you propoſe that we ſhould eſtabliſh cenſors in imitation of the inſtitution

juſt

juſt mentioned? We have thoſe already; and if all the influence of this tribunal is found but barely ſufficient to keep us juſt what we are, how little would it be able to oppoſe a new and additional motive to depravation of manners! It is evident that it would be inſufficient. The firſt mark of its impotence to prevent the abuſe of a theatre, would be its permitting one to be eſtabliſhed. For it is eaſy to foreſee, that theſe two different eſtabliſhments cannot ſubſiſt long together; the ſtage would either turn the cenſors into ridicule, or the cenſors would baniſh the comedians.

But the matter in debate regards not only the inſufficiency of laws for reſtraining corrupt manners while their cauſe is left ſubſiſting. I foreſee it will be remarked, that my head being ſo full of the abuſes neceſſarily ariſing from play-houſes, and with the general impoſſibility of preventing them, I have not made a direct anſwer to the expedient propoſed; which was, to have a ſet of comedians all worthy people, that is to ſay, our comedians ſhould be made ſuch. It is not very neceſſary to enter into a particular diſcuſſion of this circumſtance: what I have already ſaid of the effects of comedy being independent of the manners of the comedians, the objection againſt this kind of entertainment is ſtill the ſame, were the players themſelves even to profit as much as you can ſuppoſe by the injunctions laid on them; nay, were they even to become exemplary patterns of virtue. My regard, however, for thoſe of my countrymen who ſee no other danger ariſing from a play-houſe than the bad example of the comedians, leads us farther to inquire, whether, even on their

ſuppoſition, this expedient hath any probability of ſucceſs, and whether it ought to ſatisfy them.

To begin with facts, before we reaſon on their cauſes; I find, in general, that the profeſſion of a comedian is a ſtate of immorality and licentiouſneſs; that the players of both ſexes lead debauched and ſcandalous lives; that they are at once prodigal and avaricious; conſtantly involved in debt and extravagance; careleſs in ſpending their money, and little ſcrupulous as to their manner of getting it. I find alſo, that in all countries their profeſſion is diſreputable; that thoſe who follow it *, whether excommunicated or not, are univerſally deſpiſed; and even at Paris, where they are leſs contemned, and in general behave better, than elſewhere, a reputable tradeſman would be aſhamed to keep company with thoſe very players who are ſeen daily at the tables of the great. Another obſervation equally important is, that the public contempt for players prevails moſt in places moſt remarkable for purity of manners; there being ſome countries of ſingular innocence and ſimplicity, in which the profeſſion of a comedian is almoſt held in deteſtation. Theſe are undoubted facts. You will ſay, perhaps, they are owing to prejudice. I grant it: but as this prejudice is general, we muſt inquire after the general cauſe of it; and I do not think we ſhall find it ariſe from any thing except the profeſſion itſelf.

* If the Engliſh interred the celebrated Mrs Oldfield by the ſide of their kings, it was not her profeſſion, but her talents, they deſigned to honour. In England, great parts ennoble the meaneſt ſtation; and the want of them debaſes the higheſt. With reſpect alſo to comedians in particular, the lower and middling order of them are held in as much contempt, or perhaps more, at London than in any other part of the world.

itſelf. To this you anſwer, that the comedians are induced to render themſelves contemptible, becauſe their profeſſion is ſo generally deſpiſed: but wherefore ſhould their profeſſion have been deſpiſed, if it had not been deſerving of it? Why ſhould people have a worſe opinion of actors than of men of other profeſſions, if there were nothing to diſtinguiſh them? It is perhaps this particular we ought to examine into, before we attempt to juſtify them at the expence of the public.

I might poſſibly have imputed this prejudice to the declamations of our prieſts, if I had not found it prevalent among the Romans before the birth of Chriſtianity; and that not only current in the minds of the common people, but authoriſed by expreſs laws, which declared players to be infamous, deprived them of the title and privileges of Roman citizens, and ſet the actreſſes on the footing of common proſtitutes. Here we find no reaſon for the prejudice, but what muſt ariſe from the very nature of the thing. The prieſts and devotees among the Pagans rather approved than condemned theatrical exhibitions; which conſtituted a part of the diverſions conſecrated to religion *: they were not intereſted to decry them, neither in fact did they do it. At that time, however, people might as juſtly exclaim as you do now, of the abſurdity of holding a ſet of people in contempt, who were paid and protected by the public. But this circumſtance does not appear to me ſo abſurd as it may to you: for it is ſometimes proper

* We are told by Livy, that the *Ludi ſcenici* were introduced at Rome, in the year 390, in order to mitigate the plague. At preſent, the theatres would be ſhut up on a like occaſion.

per that a government ſhould permit diſhonourable if uſeful profeſſions, and yet the profeſſors themſelves ſhall not have the more right to be reſpected on that account.

I have ſomewhere read, that this contempt was not caſt on real comedians, but on the *hiſtriones*, or actors of interludes and farces, who polluted their exhibitions with buffoonry and obſcurity: but we cannot ſurely admit of this diſtinction; the words *comædus* and *hiſtrio* being perfectly ſynonymous, and no otherwiſe different than as one was Greek and the other Etruſcan. Cicero, in his tract *de Oratore*, gives the appellation of *hiſtriones* to the two greateſt actors that ever were known in Rome, Roſcius and Æſopus; and, in his oration in behalf of the former, he laments that ſo worthy a man ſhould follow ſo mean a profeſſion. At the ſame time, the law was ſo far from diſtinguiſhing between players and actors of interludes and farces, or between tragedians and comedians, that it ſtamped the ſame mark of infamy indiſcriminately on all thoſe who trod the ſtage. *Quiſquis in ſcenam prodierit, ait prætor, infamis eſt.* Certain it is, that this infamy did not relate ſo much to the repreſentation itſelf, as to the ſtate and condition of thoſe who made a trade of it: for the Roman youth acted publicly, at the end of the great pieces, the *Atellana* or *Exodia* without any diſhonour.

If we except this particular inſtance, we ſhall find, on many occaſions, that the comedians indiſcriminately were all ſlaves, and were treated as ſuch when the public were diſſatisfied with them. I know of but one people, who thought differently on this ſubject from all other nations; and

and theſe were the Greeks. It is certain, that in Greece the profeſſion of a player was far from being infamous; there being many inſtances of comedians employed in public affairs, both at home and abroad. The reaſons of this exception are obvious. In the *firſt* place, tragedy as well as comedy being of Grecian invention, the Greeks could not directly throw a mark of contempt on a profeſſion of whoſe effects they were as yet ignorant: and when theſe effects came to be once known, the public opinion was already formed concerning it. 2*dly*, As there was ſomething ſacred in the origin of tragedy, thoſe who perform in this ſort of drama were looked upon rather in the light of prieſts than players. 3*dly*, The ſubject of their dramas being taken from their own antiquities, with which this nation was extravagantly delighted, they regarded the actors, not as men repreſenting fabulous exhibitions, but as ingenious citizens inſtructing the people in the hiſtory of their country by means of ſuch repreſentations. 4*thly*, The Greeks were ſuch enthuſiaſts for liberty, as to look upon themſelves as the only people nature intended to be free; feeling a rapturous pleaſure in recalling to mind the misfortunes of ancient times, and the criminal oppreſſions of their former maſters. As they reaped a conſtant inſtruction from theſe exhibitions, they could not forbear ſhewing ſome reſpect to the inſtruments of ſuch inſtruction. 5*thly*, As tragedy, at its commencement, was acted by none but men, there was no ſuch ſcandalous admixture of men and women as now appears on the ſtage, and converts our theatres into ſchools of immorality. 6*thly*, Their public entertainments had nothing

of

of the mercenary meanneſs of ours. Their theatres were not erected merely to ſerve the purpoſe of venality and avarice: they were not incloſed in dark dungeons; nor had the actors any need to lay the ſpectators under contribution, or to count the number of people in the houſe for fear of loſing a dinner.

Their grand and ſuperb entertainments were exhibited in the open air, in the preſence of a whole people; preſenting to view combats, victories, and prizes, objects capable of inſpiring the Greeks with an ardent emulation, and firing their hearts with ſentiments of glory and honour. It was in the midſt of this grand ſolemnity, ſo proper to elevate and move the ſoul, that the players, animated with the ſame zeal, frequently ſhared with the principal perſonages of the nation the honours aſſigned to the victors at the public games. It is not ſurpriſing, therefore, that their profeſſion, thus exerciſed, ſhould be ſo far from reflecting diſhonour upon them, that it ſhould inſpire them with that undaunted courage and noble diſintereſtedneſs, by which the actor ſeemed frequently to be raiſed to the dignity of the character repreſented. But after all, if we except Sparta, Greece was never yet cited as an example of good morals: and as Sparta would not admit of a theatre, it certainly could pay but little regard to the profeſſion of a player.

To return, however, to the Romans, who were ſo far from imitating the Greeks in this reſpect, that they ſet a quite contrary example; it was not with a view to diſgrace the profeſſion, that they declared comedians to be infamous by law. Of what uſe indeed could have been ſo cruel

cruel a decree? No, they did not caſt any diſhonour on the profeſſion; they only gave an open and avowed teſtimony of the diſhonour attached to it: for laws never alter the nature of things; on the contrary, they are guided by it; at leaſt ſuch laws only are obſerved. The point, therefore, is not to exclaim againſt prejudices; but to inquire, whether opinions that are ſuppoſed to be prejudices really are ſuch, and whether the profeſſion of a comedian is not diſhonourable in itſelf. For, if it ſhould unfortunately prove ſo, it would be in vain for us to determine the contrary; as, inſtead of vindicating its reputation, we ſhould only bring diſgrace on ourſelves.

What then is the ſo highly boaſted talent of a comedian? It is the art of diſſimulation, of aſſuming a foreign character, and of appearing different to what he really is; of flying into a paſſion without cauſe, and of ſaying what he does not think as naturally as if he really did; in a word, of forgetting himſelf, to perſonate others. What is the profeſſion of a comedian? A trade, in which a man publicly exhibits himſelf with a mercenary deſign; a trade, in which he ſubmits to inſults and affronts from people who think they purchaſe a right to offer them when they pleaſe; a trade, in ſhort, by which he expoſes his perſon, carriage, and demeanour, to public ſale. I appeal to every ingenuous mind, whether he does not think this traffic hath ſomething in it extremely baſe and ſervile. Tell me, ye philoſophers, who affect to be above all vulgar prejudices, could you ſupport the ſhame of being meanly metamorphoſed into kings, and obliged to play a part ſo different from your own,

own, expoſing your majeſtical perſonages to the rude ſhouts of the populace? What kind of ſpirit, then, is it in reality that a comedian imbibes from his profeſſion? A mixture of meanneſs, falſehood, and ridiculous pride, which fits him for acting every kind of character, except the nobleſt of all, that of man, which he throws aſide.

I am not to learn, that the profeſſion of a comedian is not like that of a cheat who endeavours to impoſe on you: he does not indeed pretend that you ſhould take him for the perſon repreſented, or that you ſhould ſuppoſe him really actuated by the paſſions whoſe appearance he imitates. I am ſenſible, alſo, that in giving this imitation for what it really is, he renders it perfectly innocent. I do not directly charge him, therefore, with being an impoſtor, but with his making it the buſineſs of his life to cultivate the arts of deception, and with acquiring habits, that, however innocent they may be on the ſtage, muſt every where elſe be ſubſervient to vice. Will theſe fellows, ſo gaily dreſſed, and ſo well practiſed in gallantry, never make uſe of their arts to ſeduce young females? Will thoſe cunning valets, who diſplay ſuch a volubility of tongue and dexterity of hand on the ſtage, never exert thoſe abilities elſewhere? Will they never take a purſe from an extravagant ſon, or an avaricious father for that of Leander or Argan? It will be found throughout the world, that the temptation of doing ill, increaſes with the facility of executing it; ſo that it is neceſſary comedians ſhould be more virtuous than other men, if they are not more corrupt.

It may be objected to this, that the orator and preacher

preacher expoſe their perſons in public as well as the comedian. But there is a very great difference between them. When the orator diſplays himſelf, it is to plead in ſomebody's behalf, and not exhibit himſelf as a ſhew. He repreſents no fictitious character; but plays his own proper part, and ſpeaks in his own name. He ſays, or at leaſt ought to ſay, no more than he really thinks. The man and the character being one and the ſame, he is in his own place, and in the caſe of every other citizen who diſcharges the duties of his ſtation. But a comedian on the ſtage, diſplaying only the ſentiments of others, ſays nothing but what he is directed; frequently repreſenting even an imaginary being; ſo that the man is loſt, as it were, in the hero; and in this ſtate of oblivion, if any veſtige of him is diſcoverable, it is only to be made the jeſt of the ſpectators. What ſhall I ſay of thoſe who ſeem afraid of appearing too reſpectable in their own perſons, and therefore debaſe themſelves ſo far as to act in characters which they would be very ſorry really to reſemble? It is undoubtedly a melancholy circumſtance to ſee ſuch a number of bad men in the world paſs for honeſt people; but can any thing be more baſe and odious, than to ſee an honeſt comedian act the part of a villain, and diſplaying all his art to inculcate ſuch criminal maxims as in his heart he abhors.

If by all this there is not diſcovered ſomething diſhonourable in the profeſſion itſelf, there is at leaſt another ſource of corruption to be diſcovered in the licentious manners of the actreſſes; which neceſſarily occaſions the ſame immorality in the actors. Yet why, you will ſay,

ſhould ſuch immorality be unavoidable? Ah, why indeed! At any other time, there would be no room for aſking this queſtion; but in the preſent age, when prejudice and error prevail under the ſpecious name of philoſophy, we ſee mankind, intoxicated by frothy ſcience, are grown deaf to the voice of reaſon and the dictates of nature.

In every ſtate, country, and condition of life, there is ſo powerful and ſo natural a connection ſubſiſting between the two ſexes, that the manners of the one always determine thoſe of the other. Not that theſe manners are conſtantly the ſame in both; but they have ever the ſame degree of goodneſs, though differently modified in each ſex by its particular inclinations. The Engliſh women are mild and timid; Engliſhmen are hardy and bold. Whence ariſes this apparent oppoſition? It is becauſe the character of each ſex is thus heightened; and it is natural for this nation to carry every thing to extremes. In every thing elſe, the men and women in England greatly reſemble each other. Both ſexes chuſe to live aſunder; they are both fond of good cheer; both retire after dinner, the men to their bottle, the women to their tea: both ſit down to cards with calmneſs and indifference, making play rather an occupation than a paſſion: both have a great regard to decorum: both do honour to the marriage-vow; or if ever they happen to violate their fidelity, they are far from boaſting of that violation: they are both fond of domeſtic peace; both are fond of taciturnity; both difficult to be affected, but when affected agitated to extremes: the paſſion of love is in both terrible and fatal; it frequently determines

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the fate of their lives; the conſequence, ſays Muralt, is nothing leſs than the loſs of reaſon or of life: laſtly, both ſexes are fond of the country; the Engliſh ladies taking as much pleaſure in wandering up and down their ſolitary parks as in ſhewing themſelves at Vauxhall.

From this taſte for ſolitude ariſes that for contemplation and the reading of romances, with which * England abounds. Thus both ſexes, more collected within themſelves, indulge themſelves leſs in following frivolous faſhions, and have a greater reliſh for the real pleaſures of life; ſtudying leſs to appear happy than really to be ſo.

I have mentioned the Engliſh nation by way of preference to all nations in the world, becauſe there is no people among whom the manners of the two ſexes ſeem to differ more at firſt ſight. From the relation then ſubſiſting between the manners of the men and women of that country, we may draw inferences reſpecting thoſe of every other. The difference conſiſts ſolely in this, that the lives of the females conſtantly ſhew their manners: whereas thoſe of the men, being engaged in the uniformity of buſineſs, one cannot form any true judgment of them without obſerving them in their pleaſures. To know the men, therefore, we muſt ſtudy the women. This is indeed an univerſal maxim, in which all the world will agree with me. But if to this I ſhould add, that female virtues never diſplay themſelves but in a life of retirement; that the peculiar province of women is the peaceful management of their families; that their dignity

* Theſe, like the people, are either ſublime or contemptible. There never has been written a Romance equal or any thing near to *Clariſſa*, in any language whatever.

conſiſts in modeſty; that baſhfulneſs is in them inſeparable from chaſtity; that to court the looks of the men, is a mark of corruption; and that every woman diſhonours herſelf who is fond of appearing in public; I ſhould inſtantly raiſe againſt me the cry of that new philoſophy, which hath its riſe and declenſion in the midſt of great cities, and attempts to ſuppreſs the voice of nature and of mankind.

Theſe are all vulgar errors! would be the cry; childiſh notions! mere prejudices of education! Modeſty is nothing; a mere invention of the ſocial laws to ſecure the prerogatives of fathers and huſbands, and to preſerve ſome order in families. Why ſhould we bluſh at the wants excited in us by nature? Why ſhould we find any motive of ſhame, in an action ſo indifferent in itſelf, and ſo uſeful in its effects, as that which contributes to the perpetuation of our ſpecies? The deſires being equal on both ſides, why ſhould there be any difference in diſcovering them? Why ſhould one ſex be leſs willing than the other to indulge itſelf in gratifying inclinations common to both? Why ſhould man have any other laws in this reſpect than the brutes?

Tes pourquoi, dit le Dieu, ne finiroient jamais.

But it is not to man, but to his Creator, theſe queſtions ſhould be propoſed. It were ridiculous to oblige me to give a reaſon for my being aſhamed of a natural ſenſation, when the ſhame is as natural and as inherent as the ſenſation itſelf. You might as well aſk, how I came by that very ſenſation. Am I to account for the operations of nature? According to this way of arguing, they who know not why man exiſts,

may

may take upon them of courſe to deny his exiſtence.

It is much to be feared that theſe ſcrutinizers into the counſels of the Almighty, have but very ſuperficially canvaſſed his reaſons. As to my part, who do not pique myſelf on knowing them, yet I think I ſee ſome that have eſcaped theſe profound inquirers. They may ſay what they pleaſe; but it is moſt certain, that the ſhame or baſhfulneſs which induces animals to conceal the pleaſures of love, hath ſome foundation in nature. It is the ſafe-guard with which nature hath furniſhed both ſexes, in order to be their protection in a ſtate of weakneſs and ſelf-oblivion, when they lie entirely at the mercy of the firſt comer. Thus it covers their ſlumbers with the veil of night, that they be leſs expoſed to hoſtile inſults during that time of darkneſs and obſcurity; and thus it prompts every ſuffering animal to ſeek retirement and ſolitude, that it may die in peace, and out of the reach of attacks it can no longer reſiſt.

As to the baſhfulneſs of the fair ſex in particular; what better arms could nature beſtow on thoſe whom ſhe formed to act in the defenſive? Our deſires are equal! This is ſaying nothing, unleſs there were on both ſides an equal ability to gratify them. What would become of our ſpecies, if the order of attack and defence were changed? The aſſailant might chance to pitch on a time when it would be impoſſible to reap a victory; the aſſailed might be left at peace, when it would be neceſſary for him to yield to an attack, and might be inceſſantly honoured when he would be too weak to ſupport it: in fine, the power and the will being always at

variance, love would be no longer the support but the ſcourge and deſtruction of our ſpecies.

Were the two ſexes equally formed for making and receiving advances, no ſolicitude or importunity could be kept up between them; the fire of love always languiſhing in liftleſs liberty, would ſoon be extinguiſhed; the moſt delightful of all human ſenſations would hardly affect the he[illegible] and the intent of it by no means be anſwered. The apparent obſtacle which ſeems to remove this object to a diſtance, is in reality what occaſions it to draw near. When the deſires are concealed under bluſhes, they grow only the more ſeductive; modeſty ſerves only by reſtraint to inflame them. The fear, the reſerve, the timid confeſſion, the tender and artleſs delicacy, of the baſhful lover, ſerve only the better to diſcloſe what he thinks to conceal. Theſe are the circumſtances that enhance the value of favours, and even ſoften denials. True love poſſeſſes in fact what modeſty only diſputes with it. This admixture of weakneſs and modeſty renders the paſſion more affecting: the leſs it obtains, the greater value it ſets on what hath been granted, and thus enjoys at once as well what is denied it as what it poſſeſſes.

It is aſked, why that which is not ſhameful in a man ſhould be thought ſo in a woman? Why ſhould one ſex regard that as criminal which the other thinks lawful? What queſtions! Juſt as if the conſequences were on both ſides equal! as if all the ſevere duties of a woman were not derived ſolely from the neceſſity of a child's having a father! But were theſe important conſiderations out of the queſtion, we ſhould ſtill be able to make the ſame anſwer, and it would

would be always valid; "It is the ordinance of nature, and it is criminal to suppress her voice." Man may be bold and forward; nature designed him to be so *: for one of the sexes must make a declaration. But a woman without modesty must be criminal and depraved; because she suppresses a natural sensation, the proper characteristic of her sex.

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* We must distinguish, however, between this boldness and brutal insolence: for nothing can proceed from more opposite sensations, nor hath more contrary effects. I suppose a passion innocent and free, that receives no laws but from itself; a passion that presides over its own mysteries, and forms an union of persons as well as of hearts. Should a man insult the modesty of a woman, or use violence to a young and lovely object that hath no regard for him, his motive would not merit the name of love, but of brutal lust: it would betray a soul destitute of all delicacy, and incapable of love or honour. The greatest value of the pleasures of love, depends on the heart which grants them; thus a real lover would be miserable even in the possession of the beloved object, did he not imagine he was beloved again.

The man who would gratify his desires, without the consent of the person who raised those desires, must have the insolence and brutality of a satyr: but he who knows how to express his desires without giving offence, how to render them engaging and interesting, how to act in such a manner as to inspire, in the person he loves, an equal share of affection, how to subdue his passions before he attacks the object; he, I say, who acts thus, may be truly said to display a manly boldness. It is not enough even to be beloved; the inspiring the object with equal desires, confers no right to gratify them: the will must also be brought to consent. In vain doth the heart grant what is refused by the will. The man of honour, and the lover, abstain from this favour even when it is in their power to obtain it. To extort a tacit consent is all the violence permitted in love. To read it in the fair one's looks, to see it in her air, notwithstanding a verbal declaration to the contrary; this is the lover's art. If then he arrive at the completion of his happiness, he is not guilty of brutality, but behaves with honour; he offers no insult to modesty, but reveres and assists it; leaving it the honour to defend what it might perhaps have abandoned.

Can any one diſpute the reality of this ſenſation? Does not all the world bear ſtriking teſtimony of it? A ſimple compariſon between the ſexes, is ſufficient to prove its exiſtence. Doth not nature adorn young females with features ſo mild and ſoft, that a glowing bluſh renders them ſtill more engaging? Hath not nature formed the complexion more delicately, and given their ſkin a finer texture, in order to diſcloſe this virgin bluſh with additional beauty? Hath not ſhe formed them ſo fearful that they may fly from us, and at the ſame time ſo weak that they may be forced to yield? Why hath ſhe given them a heart more ſuſceptible of pity; why made them leſs ſwift of foot, leſs robuſt of body; why given them leſs height of ſtature, and greater delicacy of muſcles, unleſs ſhe intended they ſhould ſubmit to man? Subject to the inconveniences of pregnancy, and to the pains of child-birth, could theſe require a diminution of ſtrength? But to reduce them to this perilous ſtate, it was neceſſary they ſhould be ſo ſtrong as not to yield without their own conſent, and ſo weak as to have always a pretext for yielding. This is exactly the ſituation in which nature hath placed them.

But let us paſs from theory to experiment. If modeſty were merely a prejudice of education, acquired only in ſociety, it ought to be ſtronger where education is moſt poliſhed and refined, and where the laws of ſociety have received the greateſt improvement; as it ought, for the ſame reaſon, to be weaker where mankind have been leaſt poliſhed, and where they continue in a ſtate nearer to that of nature. Experience, however,

however, proves the contrary *. In the mountains of Switzerland the women are remarkably baſhful and timid; a ſingle word puts them to the bluſh; they dare hardly look up in preſence of the men, or ſpeak a word in their company. Whereas in great cities, baſhfulneſs is thought mean and ignoble; it is the only thing a lady ſhould be aſhamed of; the honour of putting a modeſt man to the bluſh belonging only to women of the firſt breeding.

The argument taken from the example of the brutes, proves nothing: neither is it in fact true. Man is not a dog nor a wolf. Nothing more is required than the primary ſimple relations of ſociety, to give a moral quality to our ſenſations; which could never be the caſe with brutes. Animals, it is true, have a heart; and they have paſſions; but the ſacred image of virtue and of beauty never entered into any other heart than that of man.

But notwithſtanding this, where do we learn that inſtinct doth not ſometimes produce effects in brute animals, ſimilar to thoſe which ſhame produces in man? We ſee daily inſtances to the contrary. Do not I ſee ſome brutes conceal themſelves on particular occaſions, in order to remove out of ſight a diſguſting object; and afterwards, inſtead of running away, taking pains pains to hide even the appearance of it? Hath not this all the air of decency? At leaſt ſo would ſuch behaviour be accounted in man. In their amours

* Here I forſee an objection. Among the ſavages, it will be ſaid, the women have no modeſty, for they go naked To this I anſwer, that among us the women have leſs, for they go dreſſed. See the concluſion of this letter, relative to the maids of Sparta.

amours they have all their little caprices, their compliances and refuſals; all which appear deſigned, and ſeem as if deduced from the maxim of provoking the paſſion by reſiſtance. I have before me, while I am now writing, an example that confirms what I ſay. Two young doves, in the happy ſeaſon of their firſt loves, exhibit a picture very different from that luſtful brutality which our pretended naturaliſts impute to theſe creatures. The white turtle follows her beloved ſtep by ſtep, yet flies away from him as ſoon as he turns about. If he takes no notice of her, ſhe endeavours by gentle billings to excite him to play. If he retires, ſhe purſues him; if he defends himſelf, ſhe flies back a few paces and invites him on again: thus doth the innocence of nature manage the decoys and gentle reſiſtances of love, with an art equal to that of the moſt finiſhed coquette. Not the fickle Galatea herſelf could act the part better; and Virgil might have borrowed from a dove-houſe one of the moſt charming images he ever drew.

But could it ever be denied that a peculiar ſenſe of ſhame is natural to the female ſex, would it be the leſs true that their province in ſociety ought to be that of retirement and domeſtic œconomy, and that they ſhould be educated in principles adapted to that end? If the timidity and modeſty, by which they are ſo amiably diſtinguiſhed, are of human invention, it is of great importance to ſociety that every woman ſhould acquire and cultivate theſe qualities; and ſhe who refuſes or neglects to comply with them, ſhould accordingly be adjudged to act contrary to the rules of morality. Nature affords not a more engaging and delightful picture, than that

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of a mother ſurrounded by her family of children, regulating the ſeveral occupations of her domeſtics, endeavouring to make her huſband eaſy and happy in his ſituation, and directing the whole œconomy of her houſe with prudence. It is here that the diſcreet wife appears in her glory; it is here that ſhe really commands reſpect, and that beauty juſtly ſhares the tribute paid to virtue. On the contrary, when the miſtreſs of a family rambles abroad, her houſe is, like a lifeleſs body, ſoon corrupted; ſhe herſelf loſes her principal luſtre, and appears to a great diſadvantage, being ſtripped of her native ornaments. If ſhe be married, what buſineſs hath ſhe among the men? If ſingle, why does ſhe run the danger of diſguſting, by her indecent behaviour, the man who might poſſibly be inclined to make her his wife? Let her act as ſhe will, it is evident ſhe is out of her ſphere when ſhe goes abroad; while even her beauty, which pleaſes the eye without engaging the heart, expoſes her but the more to cenſure. Let this impreſſion come from nature or education, it is no matter; it is univerſal, and common to all nations. Women are every where reſpected for their modeſty; and the men every where conceive, that when the fair ſex neglect their manners, they likewiſe neglect their duty. It is plain to all, that when the women affect a manly aſſurance, it degenerates into effrontery; and that in debaſing themſelves by this odious imitation, they are a diſgrace both to their own ſex and ours.

I know that in ſome countries different cuſtoms prevail; but then obſerve of what kind of manners they have been productive. I ſhould de-

deſire no other example to confirm my principles. Let us apply to the manners of women, what has been already mentioned reſpecting the honour that is paid them. Among the ancients, in all civilized nations, the women lived very cloſe and retired: they appeared ſeldom in public; they never walked abroad with men; they had not the front rows at the theatre *, nor were even permitted to go to all kinds of entertainments. At the Olympic games in particular, it is well known, they durſt not appear on pain of death.

At home they had a private apartment where the men never entered. It was ſeldom they appeared even at table, when their huſbands had company to dinner. Women of reputation always went away at leaſt before the end of the repaſt, and others did not appear there at the beginning. There was no common place of meeting for the two ſexes; nor did they ever ſpend the day together. By this means taking care not to be cloyed with each other's company, they met each other again with greater pleaſure; and it is certain, that domeſtic peace in general was much better eſtabliſhed, and a greater harmony prevailed, among married people in thoſe days, than there does at preſent †.

Such

* At the theatre in Athens, the women ſat in an upper gallery, not very convenient either for ſeeing or being ſeen. It appears indeed, from the adventure of Valeria and Sylla, that in the circus at Rome the men and the women ſat intermixed together.

† We might impute the cauſe of this to the facility of obtaining divorces; but the Greeks ſeldom made uſe of this privilege, and Rome had exiſted five hundred years before any body took advantage of the law permitting divorces.

Such were the cuſtoms of the Perſians, the Greeks, the Romans, and even of the Ægyptians, notwithſtanding the illiberal pleaſantry of Herodotus, which confutes itſelf. If the women ſometimes treſpaſſed the bounds of this modeſty, the public outcry againſt them ſufficiently ſhewed it was an exception to a general rule. What has not been ſaid of the freedom of the Spartan women? From the Liſiſtrata of Ariſtophanes we may alſo learn, how much the impudence of the Athenian women was ſhocking to the Greeks in general. Even in Rome when corrupted, the people were offended at the ſcandal of ſeeing the Roman ladies preſent at the tribunal of the Triumviri.

Every thing is at preſent changed. When thoſe ſwarms of barbarians ſpread themſelves like a torrent over Europe, bringing their wives along with them to the field; the freedom of camps, added to the natural coldneſs of a northern climate, which rendered reſerve leſs neceſſary, introduced a different manner of living: which was farther encouraged by books of chivalry; in which fair ladies are repreſented as paſſing their whole lives in procuring themſelves to be run away with, though all very modeſtly and honourably. Theſe books being the ſchool of gallantry for the times, the people imbibed thence a notion of free converſe between the ſexes; which was ſoon introduced in courts and great cities, where they pretended moſt to politeneſs. This politeneſs, by its very progreſs, however, could not fail of degenerating into rudeneſs. Thus it was that the natural modeſty of the ſex diſappeared, and the manners of ſutlers wives were adopted by women of quality.

If you would know how ſhocking theſe cuſtoms appear to thoſe who are not accuſtomed to them, you may judge from the confuſion and ſurpriſe of foreigners and provincials on their firſt ſeeing theſe modern manners. This confuſion does honour to the women of their country; and it is poſſible that even thoſe who occaſion it, would be leſs proud of what they did, if they knew its real cauſe. It is not that they ſtrike ſuch perſons with awe, as they may imagine; but rather that they put them to the bluſh; and that when a woman baniſhes modeſty from her diſcourſe and behaviour, it naturally flies for ſhelter to the breaſt of man.

To return now to our actreſſes. I aſk how it is poſſible for a profeſſion, whoſe only object is to appear in public, and, what is worſe, to appear for money, to be ſuitable to virtuous women, and to be compatible with modeſty and good manners? Need we enter into any diſpute about the moral difference of the ſexes, to be convinced how natural it muſt be for a woman, who expoſes her perſon for money on the ſtage, to be ready to do it elſewhere; and to be tempted to gratify thoſe deſires, which ſhe takes ſo much pains to excite? Shall a prudent woman, who makes uſe of a thouſand precautions to ſecure her virtue, find it difficult after all to preſerve her innocence, when ſhe is expoſed to the leaſt danger? And ſhall theſe forward girls, who have no other education than what they learn from leſſons of coquetry and amours; whoſe dreſs is not the moſt decent *, and who are conſtantly

* To this may be added, the reaſonable ſuppoſition of their being handſome; which would certainly mend the matter greatly. See the dialogues on *Le fils naturel*, p. 183.

ſtantly ſolicited by amorous young fellows, amidſt the ſeductive ſounds of love and pleaſure; ſhall theſe girls, I ſay, be able to reſiſt, at their age and their diſpoſition, the ſeductive objects which ſurround them; the alluring diſcourſe addreſſed to them; the opportunities and importunities continually preſenting themſelves; and, above all, that gold to which their hearts are already devoted? Sure we muſt be thought to be ſimple as children, to be thus impoſed on! Vice endeavours in vain to conceal itſelf; its image is ſtamped on the countenance of the guilty. The impudence of a woman is a ſure mark of her infamy; it is becauſe ſhe hath too much reaſon to bluſh that ſhe ceaſes to bluſh any longer; and tho' ſhame may ſometimes ſurvive chaſtity, what muſt we think of chaſtity where ſhame itſelf is gone?

We will ſuppoſe, if you will, that there are ſome few exceptions; we will ſuppoſe

Qu'il en ſoit juſqu'a trois que l'on pourroit nommer.

I am inclined to believe on this head, what I have never once ſeen or even heard of. Can we call that an honeſt profeſſion, which makes a prodigy of a modeſt woman, and induces every one to deſpiſe thoſe who exerciſe it, at leaſt without the conſtant interpoſition of a miracle? Immodeſty is ſo intimately connected with their ſituation, and ſo ſenſible are they of it themſelves, that there is not one of them who doth not think it ridiculous to aſſume perſonally thoſe diſcourſes of virtue and ſobriety which ſhe declaims in public.

The actreſs indeed is always the firſt to parody

rudy her character and deſtroy the effects of her own declamation, leſt ſuch ſevere maxims ſhould prove injurious to her private intereſt. She no ſooner has done her part, than ſhe throws off both the dignity and morality of it; and tho' one learns a leſſon of virtue from her on the ſtage, one ſoon forgets it by her fire-ſide.

After what I have already advanced, I imagine there is no need to explain how the looſe behaviour of the actreſſes occaſions that of the actors, eſpecially as their profeſſion obliges them to live together in great familiarity. Neither need I explain in what manner diſhoneſt ſentiments naturally ariſe from a diſhonourable profeſſion, nor how vice divides thoſe whom a common intereſt ought to unite. I ſhall forbear to enter alſo upon the numerous ſubjects of diſcord, which the caſting of parts, the ſharing of the profits, the choice of plays, and the jealouſy of public applauſe, muſt continually excite, particularly among the females; not to ſpeak of their intrigues and gallantry. There is ſtill occaſion for me to expoſe the effects, which the aſſociation of extravagance and beggary unavoidably produce among theſe people. I have already ſaid more than is neceſſary to convince you and all reaſonable men; though I could never ſay enough to convince prejudiced perſons who are determined not to hear reaſon unleſs when it ſuits their paſſions and prepoſſeſſions.

If all this be eſſentially connected with the profeſſion of a player, by what method, Sir, ſhall we prevent the unavoidable effects? I ſee, for my part, but one; and this is to remove the cauſe. When a man, from the nature of his conſtitution, or from any particular way of living, which

which he cannot change, brings diſtempers upon himſelf, can phyſicians prevent them? To prohibit a comedian being vicious, is the ſame as to forbid a man's being ſick.

Does it hence follow that we ought to look upon all comedians as contemptible? On the contrary, a comedian of modeſt and moral behaviour, as you have well obſerved, is doubly reſpectable; as he ſhews that the love of virtue prevails over his other paſſions and even the influence of his profeſſion.

The only fault he is chargeable with, is his embracing that calling: but it frequently happens, that a ſingle extravagance in youth determines our fate in life; and when a perſon hath a real genius for the ſtage, it is not eaſy for him to withſtand its temptations. Good actors carry their excuſe along with them: it is the bad only we deſpiſe.

I have dwelt thus long on my general propoſition, not becauſe I ſhould have found it leſs convenient to apply it to the city of Geneva; but my reluctance to make my countrymen the ſubject, hath cauſed me to defer the mention of them as long as poſſible. To this point, however, we muſt come at laſt: and I ſhould have executed my taſk very ill, did I not endeavour, from our particular circumſtances and ſituation, to trace the conſequences of erecting a theatre in our city, if the government ſhould be induced by your advice and arguments to admit of it. To this end, I ſhould confine myſelf to effects ſo very ſtriking, that they cannot be diſputed by any one who is in the leaſt acquainted with our conſtitution.

Geneva is undoubtedly rich; but, though

we ſee there none of thoſe monſtrous diſpro-portions of fortune which impoveriſh a whole country to enrich a few individuals, ſcattering the ſeeds of beggary round the doors of the wealthy; it is yet very certain many of its in-habitants live very poorly, notwithſtanding o-thers are in affluent circumſtances; the eaſe and affluence of the latter being more owing to con-ſtant application to buſineſs, to œconomy and moderation, than to abſolute opulence. There are many cities, much poorer than ours, whoſe inhabitants might more freely indulge themſelves in pleaſures, becauſe their territory, which af-fords them ſubſiſtence, is never exhauſted; and, as their time is of no value, they may throw it away without loſs. But this is by no means the caſe with us, who have no territory to ſupport us, and are forced to rely ſolely on our induſtry. The Genevans ſubſiſt abſolutely on the fruits of their labour, and are furniſhed with neceſſaries from their denying themſelves ſuperfluities; and this is one of our reaſons for ſumptuary laws. It ſeems to me, that every foreigner, on his firſt entrance into Geneva, muſt be greatly ſtruck with that air of life and activity which appears throughout the whole city. Every body is employed; all are in mo-tion; all buſied in their ſeveral occupations. There is no ſmall city, perhaps, in the world, that preſents ſuch a view. In the ſuburb of St Gervais, you would think they had collected together all the clock-work in Europe. At the Molard, and in the lower ſtreets, is all the ap-pearance of merchandize, ſuch as bales lying in heaps, hogſheads ſcattered up and down, and ſuch an odour of ſpices as would make you con-

conceit yourself in a sea-port. At the bleaching grounds and the rivers, the noise and appearance of manufactories of the printed linens and calicoes seem to transport you to Zurich. The place is, in a manner, multiplied by these manufactories; and I have known persons, who at first sight reckoned it must have at least an hundred thousand inhabitants. Manual labour, the employment of time, diligence, and parsimony, are the riches of the Genevans; and with these you would have us establish, truly, a nursery of idle people, who, by robbing us both of our time and money, will occasion us to sustain a double loss!

You agree with me that Geneva does not contain above twenty-four thousand people. The city of Lyons, though in proportion much richer, and at least five or six times more populous, is just able to support one theatre; and when they play operas, the town can hardly maintain it. At Paris, the metropolis of all France, and the gulph which swallows up the riches of the whole kingdom, three theatres are indifferently supported, and at a certain time of the year a fourth *. We will even suppose the latter kept open all the year round. Now, it is certain, that out of six hundred thousand inhabitants, residing in this grand rendezvous of the idle and opulent, the theatres attract no more than a thou-

* I do not reckon the *Concert Spirituel*, because it is only a supplement or appendix to the other entertainments. Neither do I include in this account the drolls exhibited at the fair; but I reckon for the whole year, though the season lasts but six months. In making this inquiry, or comparison, whether it be possible for a company of comedians to subsist at Geneva, I suppose every thing more in favour of the affirmative than is to be deduced from known facts.

thouſand or twelve hundred ſpectators daily. Taking a like view of the other parts of the kingdom, I find that Bourdeaux and Rouen, great ſea-ports, as alſo Liſle and Straſburg, fortreſſes full of idle officers, who ſpend their whole lives in waiting for the clock, have each of them a play-houſe; and yet even in thoſe towns there is a tax laid to ſupport them. But how many other cities are there much larger than ours, in which are held ſovereign and parliamentary courts, and yet are incapable of maintaining a regular theatre.

In order to be able to judge, whether we are in a better ſituation to do it than they, let us take a well known term of compariſon; ſuch, for example, is the city of Paris. I ſay then, if ſix hundred thouſand inhabitants do not daily furniſh the play-houſes, take them all together, with more than twelve hundred ſpectators, leſs than twenty four thouſand at Geneva would not ſupply a theatre with more than forty-eight. We muſt deduct alſo from this number all thoſe who are admitted by orders gratis; and ſuppoſe likewiſe that there are as many idle people in proportion at Geneva as there are at Paris, which I can hardly do. Now if the French comedians, penſioned by the King, and proprietors of their own theatre, find it difficult to ſubſiſt at Paris with three hundred * ſpectators every time

* Thoſe who go to the play only on holidays and particular nights, when the houſes are crowded, may think I have rated this too low; but thoſe who, like me, have frequented the theatre for ten years ſucceſſively, will allow that I have rather over-rated the houſes at an average. If, therefore, we are to diminiſh the daily number of three hundred ſpectators at Paris, we muſt alſo make a proportional diminution of the forty-eight at Geneva; which will enforce my objections.

time they act; how will it be poſſible for a company to maintain themſelves at Geneva, who are to depend only on forty-eight? It will be ſaid, that people may live cheaper at Geneva than at Paris. They may ſo; but then the places at the theatre muſt be cheap in proportion: and beſides, the table is one of the leaſt expences of the comedians. It is their dreſs, their decorations, that coſt ſo much money; and theſe muſt be purchaſed at Paris, or ſome workman muſt be taught to make them at Geneva. But theſe things are always cheapeſt where they are moſt common. Will it be ſaid, that the comedians may be ſubjected to our ſumptuary laws? It would be in vain, however, to attempt to extend this kind of reformation to the ſtage; a Xerxes and a Cleopatra would never be brought to reliſh ſuch ſimplicity. As the profeſſion of a comedian requires ſuperb habits, it would be depriving him of a taſte for his art to prohibit ſuch dreſſes: and I very much doubt whether ever an excellent actor turned quaker. Finally, it may be ſaid, that the company of comedians at Geneva being leſs numerous than that at Paris, it might be maintained at much leſs expence. I admit the truth of this; but cannot ſuppoſe the difference will be in the proportion of forty-eight to three hundred. Add to this, that a more numerous company may play more frequently; whereas in a ſmall number of actors, where duplicates are wanting, they may not all be able to play every day: hence the ſickneſs or abſence, though but of a ſingle performer, will prevent the repreſentations, and be of ſo much loſs to the company.

The Genevans are extremely fond of a rural life:

life: which you may infer from the number of little country ſeats ſituated about the town. The beauty of the neighbouring meadows, and the conveniency of hunting, encourage this ſalutary inclination. The gates of the city being ſhut at the cloſe of the evening, the citizens are deprived of the freedom of walking out late; and, as their country-houſes are ſo near, few perſons in eaſy circumſtances lie in town during the ſummer. After the buſineſs of the day is over, they betake themſelves to their little retreats, before the gates are ſhut, to breathe a ſerene air, and to enjoy the proſpect of the moſt delightful landſcape perhaps under heaven. A great number of our citizens even reſide the whole year in the country, and have no conſtant habitation in town. All theſe would bring nothing to the play-houſe; and in fine weather there would be hardly any body in town, but poor people who could little afford to go to ſuch an entertainment. It is very different at Paris; where people may go to the play, and yet ſleep in the country: it being cuſtomary all the ſummer to ſee multitudes of coaches driving out of town when the plays are over. With reſpect, indeed, to thoſe who live in Paris, they are not ſo much induced by the freedom of going out of the gates at what hour they pleaſe, as they are diſguſted at the inconveniences of it. The public walks ſo ſoon grow tireſome, it is neceſſary to go ſo far to get into the country, the environs are ſo greatly infected with a bad air, and there is ſo little beauty in the proſpect, that they rather chuſe to repair to the theatres. There is another difference, which muſt turn out greatly to the diſadvantage of our comedians at Geneva; being

being no leſs than the loſs of half a year's recepts. Can you imagine, Sir, they would ſo eaſily find the means to make up for this loſs during the reſt of the year? As to my part, I ſee no remedy for this inconvenience, but that of varying the hour for ſhutting our gates; to ſacrifice our ſafety to our amuſements; and to leave a fortreſs * open all night, in the midſt of three powers, the fartheſt of which is within half a league of our very glacis.

Nor is this all: it were impoſſible, in my opinion, that an inſtitution, ſo inconſiſtent with our ancient maxims, ſhould be very generally approved. How many honeſt citizens are there, who would behold with indignation this monument of effeminacy and luxury, erected on the ruins of our ancient ſimplicity, and threatening the deſtruction of our public liberty! Can you conceive that, after having ſo loudly condemned this innovation, they would countenance by their preſence? You may take it for granted, that there are many of our citizens, who make no ſcruple of going to the theatre at Paris, and yet would never encourage plays at Geneva; the welfare of their country is dearer to them than their amuſements. Where would be found the

* I am not inſenſible that our extenſive fortifications are the moſt uſeleſs things in the world, and that they would be ſtill ſo if we had even troops enough to defend them; for certainly nobody will ever attempt to beſiege us. But, though we are in no danger of a ſiege, this ſhould not prevent our guarding vigilantly againſt a ſurprize. A body of troops may be eaſily aſſembled in our neighbourhood. We have experienced this to our coſt, as well as the uſe that may be made of ſuch troops. It ſhould be remembered, therefore, that be the pretenſions of an enemy ever ſo ill founded while he is without the walls, they will prove ſufficiently valid ſhould he get within.

the mother ſo imprudent as to take her daughter to this dangerous ſchool? And how many virtuous women are there, who would think it diſhonourable to go themſelves? If there are ſome perſons at Paris who abſtain from theatrical diverſions, it is ſolely from motives of religion; which certainly ſhould operate as powerfully as Geneva; where the farther motives of morality, virtue and patriotiſm, ought to reſtrain thoſe who are not influenced by the former *.

I have ſhewn it to be abſolutely impoſſible for a play-houſe to be ſupported at Geneva by the voluntary contributions of the ſpectators. Of two methods then, we muſt chuſe one; either that the rich ſhould ſupport it by ſubſcription among themſelves; or that the government ſhould interfere, and ſupport it out of the revenues of ſtate. And whence is this ſupport to be deduced? Muſt it be by retrenching the neceſſary expences of adminiſtration, for which our very moderate revenues are hardly ſufficient, that a ſum adequate to this purpoſe muſt be raiſed? Or muſt the ſums, which the integrity and oeconomy of our magiſtracy ſometimes lay up in reſerve for the extraordinary emergencies of the ſtate, be devoted to this important purpoſe? Muſt we caſhier our little garriſon, and ſtand centinel at our own gates? Shall we reduce the moderate fees of our magiſtrates, and im-

* I do not mean to inculcate that we can be virtuous without religion: I was long of this ſpecious opinion, but am at length undeceived. My meaning is, that Chriſtians may ſometimes abſtain from ſome particular actions, merely thro' motives of ſocial virtue; when thoſe actions are in themſelves indifferent, and do not affect the conſcience; ſuch as going to plays in a city where it is improper for plays to be permitted.

improvidently deprive ourſeves of every reſource againſt the ſmalleſt unforeſeen accident? If theſe expedients are objected to, I know of but one more, in any way practicable; and this is the laying a tax or impoſt on the public in general; to ſummon the citizens and houſe-keepers to a common council in St Peter's church, and there gravely propoſe to them an aſſeſſment for the inſtitution and ſupport of a play-houſe. God forbid I ſhould think our wiſe and worthy magiſtrates capable of ever making ſuch a propoſal: and indeed, from what is advanced in your own article, it is eaſy to judge of the manner in which it would be received.

Were we ſo unfortunate as to light upon ſome expedient to remove theſe difficulties, it would be ſtill ſo much the worſe: for this could never be done without encouraging ſome ſecret vice, which would ſap the foundation of our little republic, and ſooner or later effect its deſtruction.

We will ſuppoſe, however, that our regard for the ſtage ſhould work a miracle; ſo that a company of players eſtabliſhed at Geneva ſhould be kept within bounds by law, and the theatre be well managed and ſucceſsful: we will ſuppoſe, finally, our city to be in the flouriſhing condition you deſcribe, and that it really joined the advantages of good morals and public entertainments: advantages, nevertheleſs, which to me ſeem incompatible; for the intent of public amuſements being to ſupply the deficiency of morals, they are of courſe of no uſe where there is no ſuch deficiency.

The firſt perceptible effect of that eſtabliſhment would be, as I have already obſerved, a revolution in our cuſtoms; which would neceſ-

ſarily effect a revolution in our manners. We come now to inquire, therefore, whether ſuch a change would be to our advantage?

There is no well conſtituted ſtate without certain cuſtoms and uſages, ſo intimately connected with its form of government that they contribute greatly to its ſupport. Such, for example, was that of the clubs in London, ſo injudiciouſly ridiculed by the author of the Spectator; and which have been ſucceeded by coffee-houſes, and worſe places of amuſement. I doubt whether the Engliſh have got much by the exchange. Similar clubs are at preſent held at Geneva under the name of *circles*; and if I may judge from your article, you yourſelf can bear teſtimony of the good ſenſe which prevails in thoſe aſſemblies.

Theſe meetings are of long ſtanding with us, though their preſent apellation be new. Clubs, I know, were kept in Geneva, when I was very young, under the name of *ſocieties*; but their form was leſs regular. Our military exerciſes, which aſſemble the people together in the ſpring of the year; the prizes beſtowed at different ſeaſons, and the feaſts attending them, together with a taſte for hunting common to the Genevans; all theſe things afforded frequent opportunities of friendly meeting and forming parties of pleaſure; but, the intent of theſe meetings being nothing more than recreation, they ſeldom were held any where but in a tavern. Our civil diſcords, and the neceſſity of our affairs, obliging us to aſſemble frequently, and to deliberate more coolly, thoſe firſt tumultuous meetings were changed into more decent and regular aſſemblies. They then aſſumed the name of

circles,

circles, and thus a very good effect ſucceeded a very bad cauſe *.

Theſe *circles* are ſocieties of twelve or fifteen perſons, who hire a convenient apartment, and furniſh it with moveables and neceſſaries at their own charge. Hither the members, who are not engaged by pleaſure or buſineſs elſewhere, reſort every afternoon: each perſon purſuing without reſtraint ſuch amuſements as he is inclined to; whether it be play, converſation, reading, drinking, or ſmoking. Sometimes they ſup here, though but ſeldom; becauſe the Genevans are very regular in their families, and uſually ſup at home. It is common for the members of theſe circles to walk out together; when their amuſements conſiſt generally of ſuch exerciſes as are healthful, and proper to invigorate the body. On the other hand, the women, married and ſingle, have their ſocieties at each other's houſes; where they divert themſelves at cards, with a collation; and, as you may well conceive, with inceſſant prattle. The men ſeldom are ſeen in theſe female ſocieties; from which, however, they are not ſtrictly excluded; and I ſhould think worſe of a man who ſhould be conſtantly there, than of one who never went thither at all.

Such are the daily amuſements of the citizens of Geneva; which, without excluding pleaſure or gaiety, have ſomething in them innocent and ſimple, which beſt ſuits with the manners of a republic. But if a play-houſe ſhould once be erected, we may bid adieu to our circles and ſocieties. This is the revolution I foretold; all

* I ſhall ſpeak hereafter of its inconveniences.

theſe muſt neceſſarily have an end. You will object, perhaps, the example of London above-mentioned; where the exiſtence of theatres does not prevent the formation of clubs. But it is to be obſerved, there is a very wide difference between London and Geneva. A theatre is no more than a ſimple point in ſo extenſive a city, whereas in ours it would be a large ſurface that would abſorb all other objects of amuſement.

If you proceed to aſk me, where would be the damage if thoſe circles were all put down—No, Sir, ſuch a queſtion can never come from a philoſopher. This would be to talk like a woman or a young fop, who ſhould treat our *circles* like guard-rooms, and object to their ſmell of tobacco. To this queſtion, however, it will not be improper to give an anſwer: for, notwithſtanding I addreſs myſelf to you, I write for the public, as I doubt not it is pretty apparent: but it is you who have compelled me to it.

I ſay then, in the firſt place, that though the ſmell of tobacco may be diſagreeable, it is very agreable for men to be maſters of their own property, and to be able to ſleep quietly in their beds. But I already forget I am not writing for ſuch men as M. d'Alembert. I muſt explain myſelf in another manner.

Let us purſue the indications of nature; let us conſult the intereſt of ſociety; we ſhall then find that the ſexes ought ſometimes to be aſſembled, though uſually they ſhould live ſeparately. This I obſerved, a few pages before, with reſpect to women, and now I repeat the obſervation with regard to the men. The latter are affected by their converſation with the other ſex, as much or rather more than the former. The

women

women only hurt their morals, the men injure both their morals and conſtitution: for the weaker ſex being incapable of conforming to our manner of life, which would be too laborious for them; we are obliged to take up with theirs, which is as much too indolent and effeminate for us; and as they will not afterwards admit of a ſeparation, and want power to become men, they degrade us into women.

This inconvenience, which debaſes the men, is every where conſiderable: but it is particularly of the higheſt importance to prevent it in ſuch a government as ours. As to a monarchy, it is no matter whether a king reigns over men or women, on condition that he is obeyed; but in a republic it is neceſſary the ſubjects ſhould be men *.

The ancients ſpent the greateſt part of their lives in the open air, either in the management of their own buſineſs, in regulating affairs of ſtate, or in walking in the fields, in gardens, or on the ſea-ſhore, expoſed to the ſun and rain, and generally bare-headed †. On theſe occaſions

* I ſhall be told, perhaps, that kings want men too, in order to carry on their wars. By no means. They need only raiſe a hundred thouſand women inſtead of thirty thouſand men. Women do not want courage: they prefer their honour to life; and when they do fight, they fight in earneſt. The inconvenience attending their ſex, is, that they cannot ſupport the toils of war, or the ſeverity of the ſeaſons. Thrice the number therefore ſhould be raiſed as are wanted for fighting, in order to make up for the loſs of two-thirds by hardſhips and mortality.

† After the battle gained by Cambyſes over Pſammeticus, the Egyptians, who went always bare-headed, were known among the dead bodies by the thickneſs of their ſkulls: the Perſians, who uſed to wear large tiaras on their heads, had ſuch ſoft ſkulls that they were eaſily indented. Herodotus himſelf was long after witneſs to this difference.

ſions they were never accompanied by the women; though they knew where to find them when they wanted their company; and yet we do not perceive, either from their writings, or ſuch ſketches of their converſation as are tranſmitted to us, that this ſeparation was in the leaſt prejudicial either to their wit, their taſte, or even to their amours. As to the moderns, they have acquired very different manners: devoted to the caprice of a ſex, to which we ſhould afford protection and not pay homage, we have learned to deſpiſe them even in obeying them, and to affront them by our complaiſance.

The Pariſian ladies have aſſemblies of men, who are more effeminate than themſelves, and know how to pay every homage to beauty, except that of the heart, which is its due. But, if we obſerve theſe men, we ſhall find they are ſtill uneaſy amidſt this voluntary confinement; we ſee them alternately riſing up and ſitting down, running perpetually from the window to the fire-ſide and back again. How often will they take up a thing and lay it down again! How they rummage books, look at pictures, run about the room; while the female idol reclines motionleſs on a ſofa, and makes uſe of no other action than that of her tongue and her eyes! To what is this difference owing, but that nature dictates this ſedentary method of life to women, and a very different one to men; in whom this evident reſtleſſneſs under the like circumſtances betrays a real want? The eaſtern nations, it is true, uſe but little exerciſe, and walk about little, the warmth of their climate cauſing them to perſpire ſufficiently without it; then

then they repoſe themſelves in the open air and breathe freely; but in France the women are particularly ſolicitous to ſtifle their friends in the cloſeſt rooms of their houſe.

If we compare the ſtrength of the ancients with that of the moderns, we find no degree of equality. Our exerciſes of the academy are mere boy's play, compared with thoſe of the ancient Gymnaſia: even the game of tennis hath been neglected becauſe it was too fatiguing, and we do not travel ſo much on horſeback as formerly. I do not ſpeak here of our troops. The marches of the Greek and Roman armies are now inconceivable; the length of way, the labour, the burden of the Roman ſoldier, give us pain, and terrify the imagination even to read of them. The officers of the infantry were not permitted to ride on horſeback; even the generals frequently marching with their troops on foot. The two Catos never travelled otherwiſe, either when alone or with the army. Even Otho himſelf, the effeminate Otho, marched on foot, wearing a helmet, when he led his troops againſt Vitellius. I ſhould be glad to ſee a ſingle officer in the ſervice capable of doing as much at preſent. We are ſunk in every reſpect. It is the daily complaint of our ſculptors and painters, that they can no longer find models equal to thoſe of antiquity. And why ſo? Is nature degenerated? Is the ſpecies ſubject to a phyſical decrepitude like the individual? Not at all: the northern barbarians, who repeopled Europe, as it were, with a new race of men, were much larger and ſtronger than the Romans, whoſe empire they ſubverted! and hence we ought to be ourſelves ſtronger, as being for the moſt part de-

deſcended from thoſe invaders. But the ancient Romans lived like men *, and acquired by their conſtant exerciſes that vigour which nature had denied them; whereas we, on the contrary, loſe our natural ſtrength by that indolent life to which our ſervile attachment to the female ſex hath reduced us. It is true, the barbarians juſt mentioned lived with their women; but they did not live like women: on the other hand, their women had the hardineſs to behave like men; as did alſo the women of Sparta. Among both, the wife grew ſtrong and robuſt without enervating the huſband. As this ſolicitude to counteract nature, is hurtful to the body, it is alſo ſtill more ſo to the mind. Imagine to yourſelf what kind of a ſoul that man muſt have, whoſe attention is entirely engroſſed with the trifles belonging to women; and who ſpends all his time in doing thoſe things for them which they ought to do for us, when, wearied out with fatigue, we ſhould be inclined to amuſe ourſelves with their company. Devoted to ſuch puerile employments as theſe, how can it be expected we ſhould riſe to any thing truly great? Our genius, our writings, all ſavour of theſe our frivolous occupations †. They are agreeable, if

* The Romans were the ſlighteſt-made men of all Italy; inſomuch that, Livy tells us, their national troops were diſtinguiſhed at firſt ſight from thoſe of the other parts of Italy. Yet ſuch advantages did their diſcipline give them, that the weak were able to overcome the ſtrong.

† Women in general are admirers of none of the arts; they have no diſpoſition for any, nor are they poſſeſſed of genius. They may ſucceed in little performances, which require only ſprightlineſs of fancy, delicacy of taſte, or a ſuperficial underſtanding. By dint of application, alſo, they may acquire ſcience, erudition, literature, and whatever is

if you will, but empty and inſipid as our ſentiments; their whole merit conſiſting in giving an eaſy turn to mere trifles. Such performances live but for a day; and being calculated only to amuſe the fair ſex, fly ſpeedily from the toilette to the paſtry-cook's. By theſe means the ſame things may be perpetually repeated, and paſs for new. You may make, perhaps, a few exceptions; but I can cite you an hundred thouſand inſtances to prove the aſſertion ſufficiently general. It is for this reaſon moſt of the productions of the preſent times are ſo ſhort-lived; whence poſterity will be led to conclude that few books have been produced in an age that abounds with their multiplicity.

It would be very eaſy to prove, that the women, inſtead of being gainers by this change of cuſtom, are really loſers. At preſent they are more flattered, and leſs beloved. They are courted, and not reſpected; they are ſurrounded by agreeable danglers, but have no real lovers; and what is ſtill worſe, the former uſurp the privileges of the latter, without poſſeſſing the ſame ſentiments. The too eaſy and frequent intercourſe between the ſexes hath been productive

is to be attained by mere aſſiduity. But that celeſtial fire which warms and animates; that genius which conſumes and devours; that glowing eloquence, thoſe ſublime tranſports, which penetrate the ſoul, will be ever found wanting in the works of female writers. Their compoſitions are pretty and cold like themſelves: they have as much wit as you can deſire, but never any force: they are an hundred times more ſenſible than paſſionate. They know not how to deſcribe, or even to feel, the paſſion of love itſelf. Sappho and one more female author are alone to be excepted. I would venture to wager, that the famous Portugueſe letters were written by a man. Now, wherever the women have the aſcendant, a female taſte muſt have the aſcendant too; and this determines that of the preſent age.

tive of this effect: and thus it is that a general ſpirit of gallantry hath been at the ſame time deſtructive both of love and ſincerity.

For my own part, I cannot eaſily conceive how men have arrived at this pitch of ſhewing ſo little reſpect for the fair ſex, as to peſter them with inſipid phraſes and ironical compliments, that wear not even ſo much as the appearance of ſincerity. I ſhould think, that to affront them by ſuch palpable falſehoods, ought to be accounted the ſame thing as to tell them we have nothing obliging to ſay to them. Love may deceive itſelf, with regard to the good qualities of the beloved object; this too often happens: but hath this any thing to do with the frivolous jargon I am ſpeaking of? Do not thoſe who make uſe of it, addreſs it indiſcriminately to every woman they converſe with? And would not they be heartily diſpleaſed, were they ſuſpected to be ſeriouſly in love with any? They need not be uneaſy, however, on this head. We muſt entertain but ſtrange ideas of love to think them capable of that paſſion; for nothing is more unlike the voice of love than that of gallantry. From the notion which I conceive of this fatal paſſion; of its ſolicitudes, its doubts, its palpitations, its tranſports, its glowing expreſſions, its ſtill more expreſſive ſilence, its inexpreſſible looks, which grow raſh even from timidity, and betray the fondneſs of deſires by fear; it appears to me, I ſay, that after ſo impaſſioned a language as this, if the lover could once ſay to his miſtreſs in mere words, *I love you*, ſhe would certainly anſwer him with indignation, *No, you love me no longer*, and would never ſee him more.

Our *circles* preſerve among us ſome faint image

mage of ancient manners. The men, by conversing among themselves, are dispensed from levelling their notions of things to the capacities of the women, and from dressing up reason in the mask of gallantry. Thus they may enter into grave and sober conversation without being apprehensive of exposing themselves to ridicule. They may venture to speak of virtue and patriotism, without passing for visionaries; and to assert their freedom, without being subjected to the caprices of a silly woman. If the conversation have possibly a turn less polite, the argument of it will have greater weight; for pleasantry and gentility have little force at Geneva. Difficulties are not there solved by turns of wit; nor do our disputants spare one another in an argument: every one, finding himself attacked with the whole force of his opponent, makes use of all his power in his defence; and thus it is the mind acquires accuracy and vigour. The Genevans will, indeed, fall into a little vulgarity of style on these occasions: but the least vulgar are not always the most virtuous; and though their language be rude and coarse, it is preferable to that studied delicacy of style, by which the sexes seduce each other, and become guilty of actual vice without breach of decency. The way of life most agreeable to the inclinations of the men, is also the best adapted to their constitution. At Geneva they do not loll the whole day in an easy chair; but pursue such diversions as are accompanied with exercise. They go backward and forward, from their circles in town to those in the country, and vice versa. They have gardens to walk in, spacious courts for various kinds of exercise, a large lake for swim-

ſwimming, and a whole country open for ſporting. Neither are you to conceive that this ſport is ſo conveniently to be had there, as in the vicinage of Paris, where game may be found under foot, and killed as you ride on horſeback. In fine, every thing is centered in our innocent and prudent inſtitutions, that can in any ſhape contribute to make men friends, citizens, ſoldiers, and conſequently whatever is beſt adapted to a free people.

The meetings of the females are charged with one objection, which is detraction: for it is very eaſily conceived, that the anecdotes of ſmall towns cannot eſcape the cognizance of theſe commitees of women. It is alſo generally imagined, that their abſent huſbands are treated with no little ſeverity, and that every pretty woman who is toaſted by the men has not always fair play given her at the circles of her neighbours. There reſults, however, more good than harm, perhaps, from this inconvenience; which is certainly leſs an evil than what it prevents. For it is ſurely much leſs criminal for a woman to ſpeak ill of her huſband in company with other women, than for her to cuckold him with another man: it is better for her to cenſure than imitate the looſe behaviour of licentious neighbours. It is true, the Genevan women talk very freely of what they know, and not ſeldom of what they only imagine: they entertain, nevertheleſs, a real horror for calumny; and are never known to accuſe any one of what they do not believe to be true. Whereas the women of other countries are equally criminal both in their ſilence and converſation; concealing the known vices of others, for fear of having repriſals made on

on themſelves, and maliciouſly propagating ſuch as are the mere work of invention.

How many public ſcandals are not ſuppreſſed through fear of theſe ſevere obſervers; who perform in ſome degree the buſineſs of cenſors. It was thus in the flouriſhing ſtate of Rome, when its citizens, attentive to the conduct of each other, publicly accuſed the delinquent from a zeal for juſtice. But when Rome became corrupt, and nothing more was found neceſſary to be thought virtuous than to conceal vices, the unmaſking of vice drew hatred and contempt on the detector. Baſe informers ſucceeded zealous citizens; and inſtead of the good accuſing the bad, as before, the former became the accuſed in turn. Thank heaven, we are far from ſo fatal a period. We are not reduced to the neceſſity of hiding ourſelves from our own eyes leſt we ſhould be ſtruck with horror. As to my part, I ſhall not have a jot better opinion of the women when they grow more circumſpect. They will be more ſparing of their ſex, when it ſtands in more need of indulgence, and when individuals require for themſelves that diſcretion which they ſet the example of to others.

There is no occaſion to be ſo much alarmed, therefore, at the tattle of female ſocieties. Let them rail and backbite as much as they will, while they do it only among themſelves. Women really corrupted in their morals, would not long ſupport ſuch a kind of life; but, however fond they might be of detracting from other women, they would chuſe to do it in the company of the men. Whatever may be ſaid on this ſubject, I never ſaw any one of theſe ſocieties, without having a ſecret emotion of eſteem and

reſpect for thoſe who compoſed it. Such, reflected I, is the intention of nature; which hath given different inclinations to the two ſexes, in order that they may live ſeparate, each after its own manner *. Thus do theſe amiable perſons ſpend their days, buſied in occupations ſuitable to them, or in innocent and ſimple amuſements, that cannot fail to affect an ingenuous heart, and to give it alſo a good opinion of their virtue. I know not what they talk about; but they live one among another: they probably talk about the men, but they amuſe themſelves without them; and though they criticiſe ſo ſeverely on the conduct of others, their own is at leaſt irreproachable.

The circles of the men have alſo, doubtleſs, their inconveniences; and what human inſtitution is without? They play, drink, get fuddled, and ſit up all night. All this may be very true, or it may be very much exaggerated. We find in every thing a mixture of good and evil in different proportions. Every thing is ſubject to be abuſed: a trifling maxim, that ſhould teach us neither to reject or admit things by wholeſale. The rule of choice is eaſy and ſimple. When the good of any thing exceeds the evil of it, it ought to be admitted, notwithſtanding its being attended with inconveniences. On the other hand, when the evil exceeds the good, it ſhould be rejected even with all its advantages. When a thing is good in itſelf, and bad only from

* This principle, on which all good morals depend, is explained after a more clear and copious manner in a manuſcript depoſited in my hands, and which I propoſe publiſhing if I ſhould ever have time; though this declaration is by no means likely to prepoſſeſs the ladies in favour of it.

from its abuſe; which may be prevented with little trouble, or permitted with little prejudice; ſuch abuſe may ſerve for a pretext, though not for a reaſon to aboliſh a uſeful cuſtom. But whatever is in itſelf bad will always be ſo †, what pains ſoever are taken to put it to a good uſe. Such is the eſſential difference between the circles and the play-houſes.

The citizens of the ſame republic, living together in the ſame city, are not Anchorites; they cannot live always ſeparate and retired; and if they could, they ought not to be compelled to it. Nothing but the moſt barbarous tyranny can be alarmed at ſeeing ſeven or eight people aſſembled together for their reciprocal amuſement, out of a ſuſpicion that they can talk of nothing but their oppreſſions.

Now of all thoſe kinds of connections which can induce individuals to aſſemble together in a city like ours, the circles are beyond contradiction the moſt rational, the moſt innocent and leaſt dangerous; becauſe they neither are, nor deſire to be, concealed; they are open, public, and orderly. It is even eaſy to prove, that the abuſes that ariſe from them would ariſe equally from all other meetings, or that moſt others would produce much greater. Before we deter-

† Let us not calumniate even the vice itſelf, it is ſufficiently diſguſtful without exaggeration. Wine does not inſtil wickedneſs; it only diſcloſes it. He who killed Clitus in the heat of wine, put to death Philotas in cold blood. If ebriety hath its paroxyſms, what paſſion is without them? The difference is, that the others lie rooted in the bottom of the heart; whereas this takes fire, blazes, and is extinguiſhed in a moment. If we except juſt the heat of rage, which ſoon goes off, and is eaſily avoided, be aſſured, he that commits wicked actions when drunk, broods over wicked deſigns when he is ſober.

mine to aboliſh an eſtabliſhed cuſtom, it is neceſſary to have conſidered well the nature of what is to be introduced in its place. If any body can propoſe a ſcheme that is practicable and attended with no inconvenience; let him produce it, and let the circles be immediately aboliſhed. In the mean time, however, let us, if it be neceſſary, permit thoſe to paſs away the night in drinking, who might otherwiſe ſpend it in ſomething worſe.

All kind of intemperance is undoubtedly vicious, and particularly that which deprives us of the nobleſt of our faculties. Exceſſive drinking debaſes a man, alienates his reaſon, at leaſt for a time, and in the end deſtroys it. And yet the love of wine is not in itſelf a crime, and indeed is ſeldom the cauſe of committing crimes. It renders a man rather ſtupid than wicked; and, for one ſhort quarrel it may occaſion, it gives birth to a hundred laſting attachments. Generally ſpeaking, bottle-companions are frank and generous; they are moſt of them ingenuous, friendly, honeſt, faithful, brave, good ſort of people, if we except their peculiar foible. Can ſo much be ſaid in favour of any other vice that might be ſubſtituted in the room of this? Or would any one pretend that the inhabitants of a whole city ſhould be entirely faultleſs? How many real vices are often couched under apparent virtues? The man of virtue is ſober from temperance, the knave from art and deſign. In a country of corrupt morals, of intrigues, conſpiracies, and adulteries, men are fearful of that ſtate of unreſervedneſs wherein the heart indiſcreetly unboſoms all its ſecrets. Indeed the people who moſt abhor drunkenneſs, are thoſe whoſe

whoſe intereſt it is moſt to guard themſelves againſt it. It Switzerland it is almoſt in eſteem; at Naples it is looked upon with horror: but in fact, which is moſt to be feared? the open intemperance of the Swiſs, or the reſerved ſobriety of the Italians?

I again ſay, it is undoubtedly better to be ſober and honeſt, not only for one's own ſake, but for that of ſociety: for whatever is bad in morals, is ſtill as bad in politics. But the divine attends only to its conſequences to individuals, the magiſtrate only to its conſequences to the public. The former has in view that perfection of man, which man will never attain to; the latter the welfare of the ſtate, as far as it is attainable. It does not follow, therefore, that every thing juſtly cenſured in the pulpit, deſerves to be puniſhed by the laws. There never was a nation deſtroyed by the inordinate uſe of wine, but all have periſhed through a licentious uſe of women. The reaſon of this difference is clear; the firſt of theſe two vices diverts people from practiſing others, whereas the ſecond generates all the reſt. The difference of ages hath alſo a great influence in this affair. Wine is leſs tempting and leſs depreſſive to youth: their warmth of blood inſtils other deſires. During the reign of the paſſions, a ſingle ſpark from one will ſet the reſt in a flame: reaſon is clouded at its very dawn; a man grows impatient of its reſtraint before he hath borne the yoke of the laws. But when the freezing blood of age ſeeks relief, and finds an animating warmth in the generous liquor that recruits the ſpirits *: if the old man

* Plato, in his laws, allows the uſe of wine to old men only; and he even allows them ſometimes to indulge themſelves in it to an exceſs.

ſhould even abuſe this agreeable remedy, what is it? He hath already diſcharged his duty to his country, and deprives it only of the lees and dregs of life. He is, doubtleſs, much to blame, as he ceaſes, before his death, to act the part of a citizen. But the debauchee as to women, never commences citizen; declaring himſelf rather a public enemy, by the ſeduction of his accomplices, by the example and effect of his licentious manners, and above all by that pernicious ſyſtem of morality which he does not fail to propagate in his own juſtification. It had been better certainly that he had never exiſted.

From the paſſion for gaming, there ariſes a more dangerous abuſe, but which is eaſily prevented or ſuppreſſed. This is an affair of police, which can with more eaſe and propriety inſpect the conduct of the circles than that of private houſes. Public opinion may alſo have a great effect in this matter; and whenever games of activity and exerciſe come into faſhion, cards, dice, and hazard, will infallibly go out. I cannot believe indeed, whatever may be pretended, that ſuch idle and tricking methods of getting money ever will obtain much among a ſenſible and induſtrious people, who know too well the value of their time and money to throw both away together.

Let us then keep our circles with their inconveniences: for theſe inconveniences are not the fault of the circles themſelves, but of the people compoſing them; and there is no inſtitution in ſociety under which the ſame defects are productive of leſs pernicious conſequences. I ſay again, let us not go in ſearch for chimerical perfection; but for the beſt ſtate of things that

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can be obtained, according to the nature of man and the conſtitution of ſociety. I ſhould ſay, indeed, to ſome nations, Down with all your clubs and circles, take away every barrier of decency between the ſexes, endeavour to reach the height of corruption; but to you, my fellow-citizens, I ſay, Avoid being corrupted, if it be not already too late. Be cautious of taking the firſt ſtep, which is ever followed by another; and reflect, that it is much more eaſy to preſerve good morals than to reſtrain bad.

In two years time, the play-houſe will have ſubverted every thing. The town cannot divide itſelf among ſo many amuſements: the play-houſes opening at the time the circles begin, will diſſolve the latter: they will detach too many of their members; and the reſt will be too little aſſiduous in their attendance, to ſupport thoſe aſſociations for any length of time. The meeting of both ſexes daily in the ſame place; the parties which will be formed to that end; the manners which they will ſee deſcribed on the ſtage, and which they will endeavour to imitate; the exhibition of the ladies, dreſſed up in their beſt attire, and placed in the front of the boxes, as in a ſhop-window to invite cuſtomers; the concourſe of young fellows, who on their ſide alſo will come to ſhew themſelves, and think it much finer to figure away at the theatre than on the parade; the little appointments of the females to ſupper, though it were only with the actreſſes; in a word, that contempt of the ancient cuſtoms which will reſult from the adoption of new ones: all this will preſently ſubſtitute the agreeable manner of living at Paris, and the trifling airs of the French, in the room of

our ancient Swiss simplicity; and I very much doubt whether Parisians would long preserve a taste for the government of Geneva.

It were wrong to dissemble: our intentions are as yet good; but our morals are visibly on the decline, and we are following at a distance the footsteps of those very people whose fate we yet have reason to dread. I am assured, for example, that the education of our youth is in general much better than formerly; which cannot be proved, however, but by shewing that they make better citizens. It is certain, that our little masters are taught to make a more graceful bow; that they are taught to hand the ladies more politely, and to say a number of pretty things to them; for which, if I had my will, they should be heartily whipped. It is certain they take more readily on them to speak, to ask questions, to interrupt grown persons in their discourse, and to be troublesome to every body they come near. All this, it is said, tends to form them. I grant it forms them to be very impertinent; and of all the things they learn by these means, this is the only one they never forget. But this is not all. In order to keep them constantly near the women, as play-things for their amusement, care is taken to educate them exactly in the same manner: thus they are kept from the sun, the wind, the rain, and the dust, that they may never be able hereafter to support any of the inconveniencies of the weather. As they cannot however be secluded entirely from the pressure of the external air, care is taken to prevent their feeling it, till it hath lost half its elasticity. Thus they are deprived of all exercise, robbed of their faculties, and rendered

good

good for nothing but the purpoſe for which they are thus prepoſterouſly educated; while the only thing the women require of theſe pitiful ſlaves, is, to have them devoted to their ſervice, in the manner of the Orientals. When I was laſt at Geneva, I ſaw ſeveral of theſe young ladies in breeches, with white teeth, ſoft hands, ſhrill voices, and pretty green umbrellos in their hands, aukwardly affecting the characters of men. When I was a boy, we were more groſs and indelicate: educated in a ruſtic manner, children had no apprehenſions of ſpoiling their complections, nor were they afraid of the inclemencies of the weather to which they had been early inured. Their fathers took them into the country with them, carried them a-hunting, and into all their ruſtic exerciſes and companies. Timid and modeſt before perſons in years, they were bold and quarrelſome enough among one another. They were not afraid of diſordering their curled locks; but challenged each other to wreſtle, to run, or to fight: they fought alſo in good earneſt; ſometimes hurt themſelves conſiderably; and then crying, ſhook hands, and made all up. They would often come home ſweating and out of breath, with their clothes torn off their backs, like true ſlovens as they were. But then theſe ſlovens of boys grew up to be men, who have at heart the love of their country, and in their veins that blood which they are ready to ſpill in its defence. God grant we may be able to ſay as much of thoſe little ſmug gentry, our preſent youth; and that theſe men at fifteen may not turn out children at thirty!

Happily they are not all of this kind. Moſt of them have preſerved that ancient ruſticity, which

which is at once the preſerver of a good conſtitution and of good morals. Even thoſe, whom a too tender education hath rendered effeminate for ſome time, will be reduced to the neceſſity, as they grow up, to comply with the cuſtoms and manners of their fellow-countrymen. The one will loſe their rudeneſs in a commerce with the world, and the other gain ſtrength by exerciſe; thus all, I hope, will become what their anceſtors formerly were, or at leaſt what their fathers now are. But, let us not flatter ourſelves with preſerving our liberty, if we renounce thoſe manners by which it was acquired.

To return to our comedians, whom we will ſuppoſe, though in reality I think it impoſſible, to have ſucceeded in their deſign. Their very ſucceſs muſt attack our conſtitution: and that not only in an indirect manner, by hurting our morals; but directly, by diſturbing that equilibrium, which ought to prevail in the different parts of a ſtate, in order to preſerve the proper ſituation of the whole.

Out of many reaſons that might be alledged, I ſhall content myſelf with one, which is better adapted to the majority, becauſe it is confined to conſiderations of money and intereſt, more ſtriking to vulgar minds than moral effects; of which and their cauſes they are incapacitated to ſee the connection, as well as of their influence on the deſtiny of a ſtate.

Theatres, where they meet with ſucceſs, may be conſidered as a kind of tax; which, though voluntarily paid, is not the leſs burdenſome to the people; as it lays them open to the conſtant temptation to an expence which they cannot reſiſt. This tax is a deſtructive thing; not only

becauſe

becauſe it produces nothing to the ſovereign; but becauſe the expence is not proportionably divided among the public; the poor being loaded beyond their abilities, and the rich being furniſhed with a leſs coſtly amuſement than they would otherwiſe maintain. To prove this, we need only reflect on the difference in the price of the places, which are not, nor cannot be, proportionate to the fortunes of the people who fill them. At the French comedy, the firſt boxes and the ſtage are generally four livres, and are ſometimes enhanced a third: the pit is thirty ſous, and they have even attempted ſometimes to raiſe it. Now it cannot be pretended, that the income of the rich, who ſit in the boxes, is not more than four times the income of thoſe who ſit in the pit. Generally ſpeaking, the former are exceſſively opulent, and the greater part of the latter are actually indigent *. It is in this caſe, as it is in that of duties laid on corn, wine, ſalt, and other neceſſaries of life; which have at firſt ſight the appearance of equity, but are in fact very iniquitous. For the poor, who can afford to ſpend no more than is ſuffi-

* Nay, were the prices of places ſettled in proportion to that of fortunes, this would not bring things to an equality. The inferior places, being rated too low, would be left to the populace, while every man above that claſs would ſpend more than he ought for a more reſpectable ſeat. This may be remarked even in the theatrical booths at our fairs. The reaſon of this diſorder is, that the firſt places are then a fixed term, which cannot be removed; while the others are conſtantly drawing nearer to it, without a poſſibility of preventing their approach. The poor man conſtantly endeavours to ſurpaſs his twenty ſous; but the rich one has no where to fly to, beyond his four livres. He muſt, therefore, let the poor approach, whether he will or not; and though his pride ſuffer by it, his purſe is the gainer.

ſufficient for bare neceſſaries, are at three fourths of their expence for taxes; while mere neceſſaries being the leaſt part of the expences of the rich, they hardly feel the duty †. Thus he who poſſeſſes but little, pays a great deal in taxes; and he who poſſeſſes a great deal, pays but little. I do not ſee, for my part, any equity in this.

Will it be aſked, Who compels a poor man to go to the play at all? I ſhall anſwer, firſt, Thoſe who eſtabliſh them, and lay the temptation in his way: ſecondly, His very poverty itſelf, which, condemning him to inceſſant labour, renders ſome relaxation the more neceſſary for him to ſupport it. He does not think himſelf unhappy in working, however, when he ſees every body elſe do the ſame; but will he not think it cruel that an induſtrious man ſhould be deprived of the amuſements of the indolent? He therefore partakes of them; while the very recreation which is oeconomical in the rich, doubly impoveriſhes the poor, either by a real increaſe of expences, or at leaſt by giving him a diſguſt to labour, as I have already explained.

From theſe additional reflections it evidently follows, in my opinion, that our modern theatres, at which perſons pay money for their admittance, have a tendency to increaſe the inequality of fortune among individuals; though leſs perceptibly, I muſt confeſs, in great capitals, than in ſuch a ſmall city as ours. Should

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† Hence it is that the *Impoſteurs*, or tax-projectors, of *Bodin*, and other knaves to the public, always lay their monopolies on the neceſſaries of life, that the poor may be gradually ſtarved, and the rich have no reaſon to complain. If the ſmalleſt object of pomp or luxury were attacked, they would think the nation undone; but provided the great live at their eaſe, what ſignifies it whether the poor ſurvive or not?

I grant that this inequality, carried to a certain degree, may have its advantages; you muſt certainly grant, on the other hand, that it ought to have its bounds, particularly in a ſmall ſtate, and more particularly in a republic. In a monarchy, where all orders of people are intermediately arranged between the prince and the populace, it is a matter of indifference for men to remove from one rank to another; becauſe their place is ſoon ſupplied by others, and the progreſſion is uninterrupted. But in a democracy, where the ſubjects and ſovereign are only the ſame perſons conſidered under different relations, the minority no ſooner grow richer than the majority, than the ſtate is ruined and muſt change its form. Now, whether the wealthy grow wealthier, or the poor ſtill poorer, the difference between their fortunes increaſeth equally; and this difference, carried beyond its due proportion, is what deſtroys the equilibrium abovementioned.

In monarchies, no wealth can raiſe a private man above the prince; but in a republic it may eaſily ſet him above the laws: in which caſe the government has no longer any influence, but the rich man is the actual ſovereign. This being indiſputable, it remains to be conſidered, whether the inequality of private fortunes with us is not carried as far as it can be without ſhaking the baſis of the republic.

I refer the deciſion of this point to thoſe who are better acquainted than I am with our conſtitution, and the proportions of our fortunes. All I know is this, that as things take from time to time a natural tendency to this inequality, ſucceſſively proceeding to its laſt term, it

is highly imprudent to accelerate it by eſtabliſhments that will increaſe that tendency. The great Sully, who had an affection for us, was ſo good as to tell us, that playhouſes and public entertainments in every ſmall republic, and particularly at Geneva, were deſtructive to the ſtate.

If now the mere inſtitution of a theatre would be ſo very detrimental to us, what can we ſuppoſe would be the effect of the plays repreſented there? Even the advantages thence ariſing to a people for whom they were originally compoſed, would turn out to our prejudice, in giving us for inſtruction what was given them as cenſure, or at leaſt in directing our taſte and inclination toward thoſe things which, of all others in the world, would ſuit us leaſt. Tragedy would repreſent to us the actions of heroes and tyrants. And what have we to do with theſe? Are we formed either to encourage or become ſuch? It will inſpire in us a vain admiration of power and grandeur. And of what uſe will this be? Shall we be thence either more great or powerful? Of what conſequence is it to us to go and learn the duty of kings at the theatre, while we neglect our own duty at home? Will the empty admiration of theatrical virtues ſupply the want of ſimplicity and modeſty, which are characteriſtic of a good citizen? Comedy, on the other hand, inſtead of ridding us of our preſent race of impertinents, will infect us with freſh ones; it will perſuade us, that we are to blame to deſpiſe vices which are in ſuch high eſteem elſewhere. Let a Marquis be ever ſo abſurd and extravagant, ſtill he is a Marquis. Do but imagine how this title ſounds in a country

try ſo happy as to have no Marquiſſes of its own; and who knows how many trades-people may take it into their heads to follow the faſhion in imitating the Marquiſſes of the laſt century? I ſhall not repeat what I have already ſaid of the raillery conſtantly thrown on probity, of the conſtant triumph of artful vice, and the continued example of treating wickedneſs with pleaſantry. How pernicious muſt ſuch leſſons be to a people who retain the ſentiments of natural rectitude, who conceive a villain to be always deſpicable, and that an honeſt man is never a proper object of ridicule! Did Plato baniſh Homer from his republic, and ſhall we admit of Moliere in ours? Can any thing worſe ever happen to us, than to reſemble the people he deſcribes, or even thoſe which he repreſents as amiable?

I conceive enough hath been already ſaid on this head. Nor have I a better opinion of the heroes of Racine; thoſe heroes ſo well dreſſed, and ſo paſſionately loving; who, under the pretence of virtue and fortitude, exhibit only examples of young perſons given up to gallantry and effeminacy, and in ſhort to every thing capable of enervating a man and rendering him remiſs with regard to his duties. The French theatre breathes nothing but the tender paſſion: this truly is the great virtue to which all others are ſacrificed, or which is at leaſt preſented in the faireſt light to the ſpectators. I do not ſay the poets are wrong in this. A man without paſſions is a chimera: the drama becomes intereſting ſolely from the effect of the paſſions; while the heart is not engaged by the paſſions that no way affect it, nor by thoſe which it diſapproves

in others, notwithſtanding it may be equally ſubject to them itſelf. The love of mankind and of our country are ſentiments that moſt affect thoſe who are ſubject to their influence; but when theſe two paſſions are extinguiſhed, there remains nothing but that of Love, properly ſo called, to ſupply its place; becauſe its attractions are more natural, and it is leſs eaſily effaced from the heart than all others. It is not, however, equally adapted to all men; but is to be admitted rather as a ſupplement to virtuous ſentiments, than as a virtuous ſentiment itſelf, and to be admitted for its own ſake. Not that it is diſcommendable in itſelf, any more than any other well-regulated paſſion; but, becauſe its exceſſes are dangerous, and almoſt inevitable.

The worſt man is he who detaches himſelf the moſt from the reſt of mankind, and who concentrates his affections within himſelf; the beſt is he who moſt diffuſes thoſe affections among his fellow-creatures. Now it were better for a man to love a miſtreſs than to love nobody. But if a man hath a tender affection for his relations, his friends, his country and mankind, he debaſes himſelf by an irregular attachment, which is preſently injurious to the others, and is infallibly preferred to them: It is on this principle I ſay, that there are countries, whoſe morals are ſo corrupt, that it would be happy for the people if they could reach ſo high as the paſſion of love; and that there are others again whoſe morals are ſo good, that it is a pity they ſhould deſcend ſo low; among the latter of which, I flatter myſelf, I may rank my own country. Add to this, that the ſight of objects

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of too delicate a nature is more dangerous for us than to any other people; becauſe we are naturally too much addicted to the paſſion of love. The Genevan conceals, under a ſtiff and phlegmatic air and deportment, an ardour of diſpoſition, which is much eaſier excited than reſtrained. In this reſidence of reaſon and good ſenſe, we are no ſtrangers to beauty, nor to its influence. The leaven of melancholy often gives fermentation to love; the men being but too ſubject to violent paſſions, as the women are to inſpire them. The fatal effects which they have ſometimes produced, alſo, ſhew but too plainly the danger of exciting them by ſoft and affecting repreſentations. The heroes in ſome pieces, it is true, make their love ſubmit to duty; but even then, though we admire their fortitude, we approve their weakneſs. We learn leſs to intimate their courage, than to expoſe ourſelves to the circumſtances of ſtanding in need of it.

It is true, in ſuch a caſe there is greater room for the exerciſe of virtue; but he who wilfully runs into danger, deſerves to fall. Love, even love itſelf, puts on its maſk to ſurpriſe us; it dreſſes itſelf up in the enthuſiaſm and aſſumes the language of virtue; and when our error is diſcovered, it is always too late to retract. How many worthy men are there, who were at firſt generous and tender lovers, that have been ſeduced by falſe appearances to become vile corrupters of innocence, without morals, without regard to conjugal fidelity or to the ſacred ties of friendſhip. Happy is he who, when he is on the brink of a precipice, is able to check himſelf and ſave his fall. But is it when we are

on full ſpeed, that we are expected to ſtop ſhort in our career? Are we to learn to ſubdue the paſſion of love, by laying ourſelves conſtantly open to its tenderneſs? One may eaſily triumph over a ſlight inclination: but, if there be a man who hath felt the real influence of that paſſion, and hath been able to overcome it; if ſuch a mortal exiſts, I ſay, he may well be pardoned for pretending to virtue.

Thus, in whatever light we take a view of this matter, we are conſtantly ſtruck with the ſame truth. The whole merit and uſe of theatrical performances, even with regard to thoſe people for whom they are adapted, will, with reſpect to us, become highly prejudicial; not excepting the very taſte which we may imagine we derive from them; and which will be only a falſe taſte, without diſcernment or delicacy, injudiciouſly ſubſtituted among us for the ſolidity of reaſon. Taſte depends on a variety of circumſtances. The attempts at imitation which we ſee at the theatre, the compariſons we make there, the reflections on the art of pleaſing the audience, may make it bud, but never will cauſe it to blow in full perfection. This requires that men ſhould live in great cities; it requires luxury and the fine arts, an intimate commerce between fellow-citizens: it requires gallantry, and even debauchery; in fine, it requires the vices which we are forced to render agreeable, and by doing which we are led to the inveſtigation of every thing that is ſo. Part of theſe things we ſhall always want, and we ought to tremble at the thoughts of acquiring the other.

We ſhall have comedians, but what kind of co-

comedians? Will a good company come and ſettle immediately in a town that has only twenty four thouſand inhabitants? We ſhall at firſt, therefore, have but bad ones, and ſhall thence be for ſome time bad judges of their performances: and are we to improve them, or they us? We may have good pieces; but receiving them as ſuch on the authority of others, we ſhall diſpenſe with inquiring into their merit, and ſhall learn as little by ſeeing them acted, as by reading them. We ſhall not be the leſs fond, however, of ſetting up for connoiſſeurs and theatrical critics; we ſhall not be the leſs forward to take upon us to decide for our money; which will only render us the more ridiculous. There is nothing ridiculous in our wanting taſte, when we deſpiſe it: but it is greatly ſo to pride ourſelves in having a taſte, when it is a bad one. And after all, what is in reality this ſo much boaſted taſte? The art of judging of trifles. In fact, when we have ſo great an object to preſerve as our liberty, every thing elſe is very puerile.

I ſee but one remedy againſt theſe numerous inconveniencies: which is, for us to ſuit our dramas to our ſtage, by compoſing them ourſelves, and having authors before we have comedians.

For it is not proper we ſhould be ſhewn all kinds of imitation, but only ſuch as are decent and becoming freemen *. Certain it is, that plays,

* Si quis ergo in noſtram urbem venerit, qui animi ſapientia, in omnes poſſit ſeſe vertere formas, et omnia imitari, voluerítque poemata ſua oſtentare, venerabimur quidem ipſum, ut ſacrum, admirabilem, et jucundum: dicemus autem none eſſe ejuſmodi hominem in republica noſtra, neque fas eſſe ut inſit; mit-

plays, founded, like thoſe of the Greeks, on the paſt misfortunes of their country, or the preſent faults of the people, might afford very uſeful inſtitutions to an audience. But who are to be the heroes of our tragedies? A Berthelier or a Levrery*? Moſt worthy citizens! ye were doubtleſs heroes; but, debaſed by your obſcurity, your vulgar names diſhonour your great ſouls; nor are we ourſelves great enough to admire you. Who ſhall be our tyrants? Shall they be gentlemen of the ſpoon†! Biſhops of Geneva! Counts of Savoy! the anceſtors of a houſe, with which we have lately entered into a treaty, and which we are thence bound to reſpect! I would not anſwer for it that fifty years ago the devil

mittemuſque in aliam urbem, unguento caput ejus perungentes lanaque coronantes. Nos autem auſteriori minuſque jucundo utemur poeta, fabularumque fictore, utilitatis gratia, qui decori nobis rationem exprimat, et quæ dici debent dicat in his formulis quas a principio pro legibus tulimus, quando cives erudire aggreſſi ſumus. *Plat. de Rep. lib.* 3.

* Philibert Berthelier was the Cato of our country; with this difference, that public liberty began with the one, and ended with the other. He had a tame weaſel at the time he was put under arreſt. When he delivered up his ſword, it was with that eaſe and placidity which becomes virtue in diſgrace: after which he continued to play with his weaſel, without deigning to make any reply to the inſults of his guards. He died, as a martyr to liberty ſhould die.

John Levrery was the Favo, the copyiſt, of Berthelier, not merely by a puerile imitation of his ſpeech and manners, but by a calm reſignation to Providence: well knowing, that the example of his death would be more uſeful to his country than his life. Before he mounted the ſcaffold, he wrote the following epitaph on the wall of the priſon, which had been made for his predeceſſor:

Quid mihi mors nocuit? virtus poſt fata vireſcit:
Nec cruce, nec ſævi gladio, perit illa tyranni.

† This was an aſſociation of gentlemen of Savoy, who made a vow to plunder the city of Geneva; and, as a token of their engagement, uſed to wear a ſpoon hung about their necks.

devil and Antichriſt would not have been introduced as perſons of the drama *. Among the Greeks, who were notwithſtanding a people of great levity, patriotiſm was always a grave and ſerious ſubject; but in this ludicrous age, when almoſt every thing but power is turned into ridicule, people venture to talk of heroiſm only in great monarchies, while it is alone to be found in petty republics.

As to comedy, we muſt not ſo much as think of it. It would produce at Geneva a prodigious deal of miſchief; ſerving as an inſtrument to faction, party, and private revenge. Our city is ſo ſmall, that a deſcription of manners the moſt general would preſently degenerate into perſonal ſatire. The example of ancient Athens, a city incomparably more populous than Geneva, affords a very ſtriking leſſon. It was the ſtage that prepared the way for the baniſhment of many of their great men, and for the death of So-

* I remember to have read, when I was a boy, a low tragedy, wherein the devil himſelf was one of the Dramatis Perſonæ. I was informed that this play having been once acted, this perſonage when he came upon the ſtage appeared double, as if the real devil had been jealous at any one's attempting to mimic him, and that the ſpectators were ſtruck with a conſternation which put an end to the performance. This is moſt undoubtedly a ridiculous ſtory, and will appear much more ſo at Paris than at Geneva. On the ſuppoſition, however, that it be true, there was ſomething truly theatrical in this double appearance, which had a ſtriking effect.

I can imagine but one object more ſimply terrible, *viz.* that of the hand appearing on the wall and writing unintelligible characters, at the feaſt of Belſhazzar. The very idea of this is enough to make one's hair ſtand on end. It appears to me, that our dramatic poets fall very ſhort of theſe ſublime inventions: they make a noiſe indeed behind the ſcenes, with a view to frighten us, but without effect.

Every thing ought not to be expoſed to view, even on the ſtage; it is the imagination only that ſhould be affected.

Socrates. It was the theatre that brought on the ruin of Athens; whoſe calamities did but too well juſtify the apprehenſions which were expreſſed by Solon on the firſt exhibitions of Theſpis. This at leaſt is certain, with reſpect to Geneva, that it will be a very inauſpicious omen to ſee its citizens converted into wits, and employed in writing French verſes and comedies; a taſk for which we neither have, nor ever ſhall have, proper talents. But let Mr de Voltaire condeſcend to favour us with tragedies after the ſame models as the death of Cæſar, or the firſt act of Brutus; and, if we muſt abſolutely have a theatre, let him engage to ſupply it conſtantly with the productions of his genius, and to live as long as his writings!

The ſubjects of all theſe reflections, ought, in my opinion, to be maturely conſidered, before we take into the account that paſſion for dreſs and diſſipation with which the example of the comedians muſt neceſſarily infect our youth. This example will alſo have an additional effect: for if, generally ſpeaking, the laws are inſufficient to ſtem the torrent of vices ariſing immediately from the nature of the circumſtance itſelf, as I think I have ſhewn, how much more inſufficent will they be with us, when the very firſt proof of it is to be the eſtabliſhment of a company of comedians? It is not, in fact, the comedians that are to introduce this taſte for diſſipation; on the contrary, it is this taſte which paves the way for the reception and introduction of the comedians; while they, on the other hand, will contribute only to ſtrengthen an inclination already formed; and which, having gained them admittance, will cauſe them for a

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better reaſon to be continued with all their inconveniencies.

I proceed conſtantly on the ſuppoſition, that the comedians will be able to get an eaſy livelihood in ſo ſmall a city; and ſay farther, that, if ever they come to be reſpected, as you conceive, in a country where almoſt every body is on an equality, the conſequence will be, that they muſt partake of this equality; and obtain by degrees the public favour, which they will very naturally acquire. They will not be checked and awed into reſpect, as in other places, by the great, whoſe protection they ſeek, and whom they are therefore afraid to offend. The magiſtrates will reſtrain them; do you ſay? Be it ſo. But theſe magiſtrates will be ſuch as have been private people, and perhaps intimate with theſe players: their children alſo may have entered into the ſame intimacies, and their wives may be fond of pleaſure. All theſe connections form ſo many openings to protection and indulgence, which it will be impoſſible to keep always guarded. The comedians by this means will be preſently certain of impunity, and will procure the like for their imitators; it is with them the diſorder will begin, but we know not with whom it will have an end. Our women and young people, the rich and idle, will join their party, in order to evade the laws by which they are reſtrained, and to encourage their licentiouſneſs, while every one will think he is ſtudying his own pleaſures in providing for their ſecurity. And who will dare to ſtem ſuch a torrent? Nobody, except ſome rigid old parſon, whoſe remonſtrances will be deſpiſed, and whoſe gravity and good ſenſe will be looked upon as moroſeneſs and pedantry

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by our inconſiderate youth. In a word, I make no doubt, if the comedians manage matters well, and conduct themſelves with art and policy in proportion to their ſucceſs, but that in thirty years time they will be maſters of the ſtate *. Thoſe perſons who may become candidates for public offices, will pay court to them for their votes; electioneering will be carried on in the boxes of the actreſſes; and the chiefs of a free people will become the creatures of a company of ſtage-players! My pen is ready to fall from my hand at this thought. Let the event be ſuppoſed at what diſtance you will, or let me be conceived to have carried my apprehenſions too far, I have but a word more to ſay. Happen what will, either theſe gentry muſt reform their manners by living among us, or we muſt corrupt ours by living with them. When this alternative ſhall be no longer formidable, the comedians may come as ſoon as they will; it will not be in their power to hurt us.

Such, Sir, are the reflections I had to make, and to lay before you and the public, in relation to a queſtion which you thought proper to diſcuſs under an article, which was in my opinion quite foreign to the purpoſe. But, though my arguments ſhould be in fact leſs ſolid than they appear to me, and therefore inſufficient to counterbalance yours; you muſt yet agree with me, that in ſo ſmall a ſtate as the Republic of Gene-

* It is always to be obſerved, that, in order to ſupport a theatre at Geneva, our paſſion for its entertainment muſt be exceſſive; if it be only moderate, the play-houſe muſt fail. It is but reaſonable, therefore, in examining the effects of the theatre, that they ſhould be proportionable to the cauſe able to ſupport it.

Geneva, all innovations muſt be dangerous; and that they ſhould never be made without very cogent reaſons. Now I ſhould be glad to know the urgent motives of this. What are thoſe diſorders which ſhould oblige us to have recourſe to ſo dangerous an expedient? Are we undone if we do not adopt this meaſure? Is our city ſo extenſive, that it is impoſſible for our ſtate to ſubſiſt any longer without theatrical entertainments? Will you ſay that it tolerates worſe? even ſuch as are ſhocking to good taſte as well as morality? But there is a very wide difference betwixt the bare exhibition of vice, and a direct attack on virtue; the latter depending not ſo much on the nature of the entertainment, as on the impreſſion made by it. In this ſenſe, what affinity or connection is there between a few temporary drolls at a fair, and the conſtant amuſements of an eſtabliſhed theatre; between the buffoonery of a mountebank, and the regular exhibitions of the drama; between dirty booths erected to divert the populace a day or two, and a decent theatre where genteel people expect to be inſtructed? One kind of theſe amuſements is of no conſequence, being forgotten the next day; while the other is an object of great importance, meriting the whole attention of government. It is permitted to amuſe children in all countries, and every one that has a mind to it may be a child when he pleaſes without any great inconvenience. If ſuch diverſions are taſteleſs, ſo much the better; the people will be the ſooner tired of them: if they are groſs and indelicate, they will be leſs ſeductive. Vice ſeldom gains ground by tranſgreſſing the bounds of modeſty, but generally by diſguiſing itſelf under a decent

appearance; and with regard to obſcenity, it is certainly more impolite than it is immoral. It is for this reaſon that the moſt corrupt nations are always the moſt ſcrupulous and refined in their language and expreſſions. Was it ever perceived that the entertainments exhibited in fairs and market-places, had much effected on the minds of thoſe young people who went to ſee them? This is expected only from the poliſhed converſation of the ſtage; and it would be a great deal better for a young girl to ſee an hundred drolls at a fair, than to be once preſent at the repreſentation of the oracle.

Not but that I own, with regard to myſelf, that I ſhould be glad we could do without even thoſe drolls; and that all of us, great and ſmall, could learn to derive our pleaſures and duties from ourſelves and our ſtation in life. But it does not follow, that, becauſe we ought to baniſh our mountebanks and puppet-ſhews, we ſhould introduce a company of comedians. You have in your own country an example of the city of Marſeilles having ſtood out long againſt the like innovation, oppoſing even the repeated orders of the miniſtry in its favour; hence plainly ſhewing it ſtill preſerved the memory, and breathed the ſpirit, of its ancient liberty. What a ſtriking inſtance is this to a city ſtill in poſſeſſion of its liberty!

Above all things, however, we ſhould never think of forming an eſtabliſhment of this kind in the way of eſſay, and with a view to its ſuppreſſion when found to be attended with inconveniencies; for theſe are not ſo eaſily removed as the object that gives riſe to them. Theſe effects will remain when the cauſe is no more; and

and indeed no ſooner begin to be felt, than they are already paſt remedy. When our taſte and manners are once corrupted, they will not be ſo eaſily reformed; but our pleaſures, our innocent pleaſures, will loſe their charms: the theatre will make us diſlike them for ever. Avocation from buſineſs once become neceſſary, we ſhall not know how to fill up our vacant hours, which will render us burdenſome to ourſelves: the comedians will leave us in a ſtate of liſtleſneſs, which will be a pledge of their return, and compel us to recal them, or to do ſtill worſe. We ſhall do ill to erect a theatre; we ſhall do ill in ſuffering it to ſubſiſt when erected; we ſhall do ill to pull it down again: in ſhort, after the firſt error, do what we will, it muſt be wrong.

Muſt there be, then, no public ſhews or entertainments in a republican ſtate? There ſhould be a great many. It was in republics they were firſt inſtituted, and it is in them they are celebrated with the genuine air of feſtivity. What people does it more become to have frequent meetings, to engage in parties of pleaſure and diverſion, than thoſe who have ſo many reaſons for loving each other, and for continuing united? We have many of theſe feſtivals already, and I ſhould be delighted if we had more. But let us not adopt thoſe excluſive entertainments which keep a ſmall number of people ſhut up in a gloomy cavern, there to ſit for hours motionleſs, ſilent, and inactive, within partitions, iron-ſpikes, and files of ſoldiery, the diſagreeable badges of ſlavery and inequality. No, my happy countrymen, ſuch are not your feſtivals! It is in the open air, in

the face of heaven, you ought to meet and indulge yourſelves in the enjoyment of your own happineſs. Your pleaſures ſhould be neither venal nor effeminate; unpoiſoned by intereſt or conſtraint; but free and generous like ourſelves, the ſun ſhould enliven your innocent ſpectacles with his meridian beams, while you yourſelves would form one of the nobleſt ſights they ever enlightened.

But what will be the objects exhibited at theſe ſpectacles? What will there be to be ſeen there? Nothing, if you will. Whenever liberty is to be found in the midſt of plenty, there is the ſeat of human happineſs. Raiſe a maypole with a chaplet of flowers, in the middle of a plain; call the people about it, and their aſſembly will become a feſtival. But you may ſtill do better: the ſpectators themſelves may be made actors; they may be made to ſee, and reciprocally love, themſelves in each other, to the end that all may be more intimately united. I need not refer to the games of ancient Greece; there are others more modern ſtill ſubſiſting, and which ſubſiſt even among us. We have our annual reviews; public prizes; and conteſts in firing ſmall arms, in the management of artillery, and in the art of ſailing; in all which thoſe who excel are crowned kings of the day. We cannot have too many inſtitutions ſo uſeful * and agreeable;

* It is not ſufficient that the people find a ſubſiſtence ſuitable to their ſtation. It is neceſſary they ſhould live agreeably; in order to enable them to diſcharge the duties of their ſtation, and make them more contented with it; by which the public order will be rendered more permanent. The probity of a people's morals depends, more than is generally imagined, on their being ſatisfied with their condition of life. Cabals and intrigues

agreeable; the number of ſuch kings cannot hurt us. Why ſhould we not take the ſame meaſures to render ourſelves healthy and active, as we do to learn the exerciſe of arms? Doth the republic ſtand in leſs need of artizans than ſoldiers? Why ſhould we not adopt the plan of military rewards, and found other gymnaſtic prizes for running, wreſtling, throwing quoits, and other bodily exerciſes? Why do not we animate our watermen to exert themſelves for wagers on the lake? Can there poſſibly be a finer ſight in the world, than to ſee ſome hundreds of boats, elegantly equipped, floating on that ſpacious baſon, and ſetting off at a given ſignal, to ſeize a flag hoiſted as a mark; and to be brought off by the victor in triumph, when

trigues ariſe from the diſcontent and reſtleſſneſs of individuals; every thing going wrong when one perſon aſpires after the ſtate and employment of another. To act well in life, a man muſt be fond of his profeſſion. The ſtate is never properly eſtabliſhed, till individuals being fixed in their place, their united force concurs to the general good, inſtead of being employed to the prejudice of particulars; as muſt happen in every ill-conſtituted government. What are we to think, then, of ſuch governors as would deprive the people of all ſports and amuſements, under the pretence that it diverts them from induſtry? This maxim is barbarous as it is falſe. It is bad indeed, if people have no more time than is abſolutely neceſſary for them to earn their bread. It is requiſite they ſhould have ſome to eat it in comfort, or they will not continue to earn it long. That juſt and beneficent Providence, which requires them to work, admits alſo of their having ſome diverſion. Nature ſubjects them equally to exerciſe and repoſe, to pleaſure and pain. An averſion to work hurts the labourer more than the work itſelf. If you would have people active and induſtrious, therefore, give them ſports and amuſements, which may reconcile them to their condition of life, and prevent their envying others in more eaſy circumſtances. Some few days thrown away in this manner, will enhance the value of the reſt. Only take care that their diverſions are regular and decent; this is the way to animate them to induſtry.

he returns to claim the prize? All ſuch kind of entertainments are no more expenſive than people pleaſe to make them; while the concourſe alone renders them ſufficiently magnificent. It is neceſſary, however, to have been preſent at our exerciſes of this kind, to form an idea of the avidity which the Genevans ſeem to take in them. They appear to be no longer the ſame people: they are no more thoſe methodical oeconomiſts, thoſe formal caſuiſts that weigh even pleaſantry itſelf in the balance of reaſon. Every one is cheerful, gay, and complacent: his heart is at theſe ſeaſons to be read in his eyes, as it ſpeaks at all others from his lips: he endeavours to communicate his ſatisfaction to every one he ſees; inviting, preſſing, and contending with him in the zeal of good-fellowſhip and civility. All the ſeveral companies form themſelves into one, and every thing is made common among them. It is almoſt indifferent at what table you ſit down, and the whole would be a compleat image of a Spartan entertainment, if it were not ſo profuſe. Even this profuſion itſelf, however, has its propriety; the aſpect of abundance heightens that of liberty which produces it.

The winter, a ſeaſon conſecrated to the more private amuſements of particular friends, is leſs adapted to public feſtivals. There is a kind of amuſement, however, about which I could wiſh we had fewer ſcruples; I mean that of balls for young marriageable people. For my part, I never could conceive why ſo many objections ſhould be made to the practice of dancing, and the aſſemblies met for that purpoſe. Is there any more harm in dancing than in ſinging? Are not both amuſements equally agreeable to the dictates

dictates of nature? And is it a crime for thoſe who are deſtined to be united to each other, to divert themſelves together by an innocent recreation? The ſexes were formed for each other. Providence requires them to purſue the end for which they were created, and certainly the firſt and moſt ſacred of all ties is that of marriage. All falſe religions counteract nature. There is none but ours, which obeys and regulates it, that enforces an inſtitution really divine and ſuitable to mankind. Religion ought not to ſubject marriage to the embarraſſments of civil inſtitutions, to thoſe reſtrictions which the goſpel doth not preſcribe, and which all good governments condemn. Now pray, tell me, where can young people have an opportunity of contracting an affection for each other, or of ſeeing each other with more decency and circumſpection, than in an aſſembly where the public eye is conſtantly upon them, and obliges them to the greateſt modeſty and reſerve. Is it poſſible the Deity can be offended by an agreeable and ſalutary exerciſe, adapted to the ſpirit and vivacity of youth; wherein they learn to preſent themſelves with grace and decency, and where the company has ſuch a check on their behaviour that they can hardly be a moment off their guard? Can we imagine a fairer way not to impoſe on each other, with regard to their perſons at leaſt; or to ſhew themſelves in their true colours to thoſe who are intereſted in knowing them well before they lay themſelves under an obligation to love them? Does not the duty of reciprocal endearment include that of giving mutual pleaſure? and is it not an object worthy of two virtuous and Chriſtian-minded perſons ſeeking to be

be united, thus to prepare their hearts for that reciprocal paſſion which the Deity enjoins them to entertain?

What is the conſequence, on the other hand, in thoſe places where the ſexes are ſubjected to perpetual conſtraint; where the moſt innocent gaiety is looked upon as a crime; where the young people of different ſexes dare not meet in public; and where the imprudent auſterity of the parſon of the pariſh induces him to preach up nothing in the name of God, but ſervile reſtraint and irkſome melancholy? The youth of both ſexes are led to elude an inſupportable tyranny, which both nature and reaſon diſavow. Inſtead of thoſe lawful pleaſures, of which they are deprived, their giddineſs and gaiety ſubſtitute others far more dangerous in their ſtead. Private meetings artfully contrived, ſupply the place of public aſſemblies; while the parties, by dint of concealing themſelves, as if they were criminal, are tempted to become ſo. Innocent mirth loves to diſſipate itſelf in open day; but vice is a friend to obſcurity, and never did innocence and ſecreſy cohabit long together.

For my own part, I am ſo far from cenſuring ſuch ſimple amuſements, that I ſhould be glad they had the ſanction of public authority; and that, to prevent particular inconveniences, they were converted into ſolemn periodical aſſemblies, opened indiſcriminately for the youth of both ſexes. I ſhould be farther glad that a magiſtrate † appointed by the council would condeſcend

† At the head of each company, body corporate, or public ſociety, of which our ſtate is compoſed, preſides one of theſe magiſtrates under the title of *Lord Commiſſioner*. They are

deſcend to preſide at theſe aſſemblies. It would not be improper alſo, that the parents of the young people were preſent, to have an eye over their children, and to be witneſſes of their graceful deportment and the applauſes they may deſerve; in which they would of courſe enjoy the greateſt pleaſure that can be given to an affectionate parent. I ſhould be glad alſo, that all married perſons were admitted to ſuch aſſemblies as ſpectators; though none ſhould profane the conjugal dignity by dancing in public: for to what honeſtpurpoſe ſhould they thus diſplay themſelves! I would have a convenient and reſpectable part of the ſaloon railed off, for the accommodation of old perſons of both ſexes; who, after having furniſhed the ſtate with citizens, might with pleaſure ſee their grand-children preparing to become ſuch. I would have no perſon go in or out, without paying obeiſance to this honourable ſeat; and that every young couple, both before and after dancing, ſhould make a profound reverence, in order to accuſtom themſelves betimes to reſpect old age. I doubt not but this agreeable reunion of the two extremes of human life, would ſtrike ſuch an aſſembly in a moſt pathetic manner, and that tears of ſympathy and joy would often ſtart from the eyes of thoſe venerable ſpectators, capable of affecting equally the hearts of every perſon of the leaſt ſenſibility preſent. I would have, farther, at the laſt aſſembly in the year, that the young lady, who had behaved herſelf, during the preceding balls, with the greateſt decorum and

are preſent at all aſſemblies and feſtivals; nor does their preſence lay any reſtraint on the decent familiarity ſubſiſting among the individuals of the company.

and politeſt deportment in the opinion of the venerable judges of the aſſembly, ſhould be honoured with a crown by the hands of the *Lord Commiſſioner* *, and ſhould be called the queen of the ball during the enſuing year. At the cloſe of the aſſembly, I would have her conducted home in ceremony, and her parents complimented on the excellent education given to their daughter. Laſtly, I would have the magiſtrates make this queen of the ball, if married during the year, a handſome preſent attended with ſome mark of public diſtinction, ſo that this honour might be an object of ſo ſerious a nature as to be above ever becoming an object of ridicule.

It is certain, that in this caſe there would be ſome reaſon to apprehend a partiality for perſonal charms, if the advanced age of the judges did not give room to think the preference might be given ſolely to merit: but were it ſo, where would be the harm if modeſt beauty ſhould be ſometimes partially favoured? Having more occaſion to exert itſelf in its defence, does it not ſtand in need of greater encouragement? Is not beauty the gift of nature, as well as talents and ingenuity? Where is the harm of its obtaining ſome of thoſe honours, which may excite it to deſerve them, and may gratify ſelf-love without giving offence to virtue?

By compleating this plan with the ſame view, there might be given to theſe aſſemblies, under the notion of gallantry and amuſement, a very uſeful end, which would render them of great importance even as an object of police and morality. Young people having certain and decent places of meeting each other, they would be leſs tempted

* See the preceding note.

tempted to go in ſearch of others more uncertain and dangerous. In the mean while, both ſexes would more patiently purſue thoſe occupations and pleaſures which are adapted to their ſtation, and would be more eaſy under the temporary deprivation of each other's company. Private perſons of all ranks would be indulged in the pleaſure of a ſpectacle that would be agreeable to all, but eſpecially to parents. Mothers would take a pleaſure in dreſſing up their daughters, which would alſo be an amuſement to many other perſons; and as this dreſs would be innocent and laudable in its deſign, it would be ſtudied with propriety. Theſe opportunities of meeting, with a view to a cloſer union, and forming ſettlements in life, would be frequently the means of reconciling divided families, and of cementing that harmony among individuals which is ſo eſſential to a republic. Without invading the prerogatives of parents, the inclinations of children would be a little more at liberty; the firſt choice would depend a little more on the heart; the agreement of age, diſpoſition, taſte, and character, would be a little more conſulted; and leſs influence would be afforded to rank and condition, which make matches very unhappy when ſuch circumſtances are preferred to every other conſideration. The means of getting acquainted becoming more eaſy, marriages would be more frequent; and theſe being leſs circumſcribed, would prevent party diviſions, would temper the exceſſive inequality of fortunes, and better keep up the ſpirit of the conſtitution among the body of the people. Under this regulation, our balls would not reſemble public aſſemblies, but rather the meeting of one large

large family; while the peace, ſecurity, and proſperity of the republic would conſtantly find its ſource in the pleaſure and amuſement of its individuals †.

It

† I amuſe myſelf now and then in thinking what opinion people will have of me from my writings. On reading this letter, they will ſay, *The man is mad for dancing;* but I am tired to death at a ball. *He cannot bear plays;* whereas I am paſſionately fond of them. *He has an averſion to women;* I am but too juſtifiable on this head. *He hates the players:* I have all the reaſon in the world to like them; having had an intimacy with one of that profeſſion, that would have done honour to any man. They will paſs a ſimilar judgment on what I have ſaid about the poets, whoſe plays I have been obliged to cenſure. *The dead do not hit my taſte, and I have taken a pique againſt the living.* But the real truth is, I am delighted with Racine; and I never failed, if I could help it, to ſee any of Moliere's comedies. If I have ſaid leſs of Corneille, it is becauſe, not having ſeen many of his plays, and having no books at preſent by me, my memory does not enable me to cite him. With reſpect to the author of Atreus and Catiline, I never ſaw him but once, and then he conferred an obligation on me. I revere his genius, and reſpect his years: but whatever honour I pay his perſon, I owe to his writings nothing but juſtice; and it is not for me to pay my debts at the expence of the public, or of truth. If I appear at any time too free, it is entirely owing to the purity of my intentions, and to a diſintereſtedneſs which I have met with in few writers, and which ſtill fewer poſſibly will chuſe to imitate: I was never biaſſed by private views to ſwerve from my deſign of ſerving the public; with which view I was firſt induced to take up the pen; having ſeldom, I may venture to ſay, written any thing but what was contrary to my own intereſt. *Vitam impendere vero.* Such is my motto, and I think I deſerve it. I may impoſe on myſelf, reader; but I will not knowingly deceive you. You may be diffident of my abilities, but never diſtruſt my ſincerity. My zeal for the public good alone, induces me to addreſs myſelf to the public. In their behalf I forget every conſideration reſpecting myſelf; and if an individual offends me, I am ſilent, leſt perſonal reſentment ſhould render me unjuſt. This behaviour is of uſe to my enemies, who profit by it, and inſult me at their eaſe, without running in danger of reprifals. It is of ſome uſe alſo to my readers, who need not fear my paſſions ſhould impoſe on them; it is farther particularly uſeful to myſelf, who, living at peace even with thoſe who injure me, can only feel the evil

It would be an eaſy matter, on theſe principles, with very little expence, and without inconvenience to the public, to eſtabliſh more amuſements than we want, and to make our city a more agreeable place of reſidence even to foreigners; who, finding nothing like it any where elſe, would reſort hither to enjoy the ſingularity of the ſight. To deal plainly, however, I have very good reaſons for looking upon the concourſe of ſtrangers as an inconvenience rather than an advantage: being for my own part perſuaded, that no foreigner ever ſet his foot in Geneva, who did not do us more harm than good.

But do you know, Sir, what kind of people we ſhould endeavour to attract, and to keep within our walls? They are the natives of Geneva themſelves, who, notwithſtanding their real love for their country, are ſo fond of travelling, that they are found diſperſed all the world over. One half of our citizens are ſcattered up and down in different parts, and live and die far from their native country; among which I might mention myſelf, were I a perſon leſs inſignificant. I am not inſenſible, that many of us are under the neceſſity of travelling in ſearch of that ſubſiſtence which it would be difficult for us to find on the ſpot: but ſhould this our exile be perpetual? Let thoſe, to whoſe induſtry heaven hath been propitious, return,

evil I ſuffer, and not that which would reſult from reſenting it. O pure and ſacred Truth, to whoſe altars I have conſecrated the ſervice of my days, never ſhall my paſſions pollute the ſincere affection I have avowed for thee! Never ſhall fear or ſelf-intereſt divert the homage I delight to offer at thy ſhrine? never ſhall my pen refuſe thee ought, ſave what it would be afraid to yield to my revenge!

like the bees, loaden with their ſpoils to their native hive: let them cauſe their fellow-citizens to rejoice at their good fortune; let them, by diffuſing their wealth among their countrymen, excite the emulation of the riſing generation; in fine, let them modeſtly enjoy at home the wealth they may have honeſtly acquired abroad. But what is likely to induce them to return? Is it a theatre? Our play-houſe muſt neceſſarily fall ſhort of many others: and would they forſake the theatrical entertainments of London and Paris, for the ſake of ſeeing thoſe of Geneva? No, Sir, ſuch an expedient would be no inducement to the deſired end. To produce this effect, indeed, every man ſhould be made ſenſible of the impoſſibility of finding in foreign countries what he hath left behind him in his own: there ought to be an irreſiſtible attraction alſo to invite him back to the place he ought perhaps never to have quitted: the pleaſing remembrance of his youthful exerciſes, his entertainments, his pleaſures, ought to be deeply imprinted on his heart. Theſe agreeable impreſſions ought to grow ſtronger as men advance in years, when a thouſand other ideas are effaced. They ſhould hear, amidſt the gloomy grandeur and magnificence of great ſtates, a ſecret voice whiſpering from the inmoſt receſſes of their hearts, "Where, alas! are the ſports and amuſements of my youth? Where is the harmony of my fellow-citizens? Where is their fraternal affection for each other? Where is their purity of mirth and real joy? Where are peace, liberty, juſtice, and innocence? Let us go immediately in ſearch of thoſe ineſtimable bleſſings." Good God! whence comes it that, with

with the heart of a German, with ſo pleaſant a city, ſo delightful a country, ſo juſt a government, with ſuch actual pleaſures, and every thing neceſſary to give them a reliſh; whence is it, I ſay, that every individual of us doth not love and revere his country!

Thus did the inhabitants of Sparta, whoſe example I cannot cite too often as a rule for our own conduct, recall their fellow-citizens to their native country by modeſt feſtivals and ſimple amuſements. Hence, even at Athens, in the centre of the polite arts; and at Suſa, in the midſt of indolence and luxury; did the diſguſted Lacedemonian regret the ruder entertainments and toilſome exerciſes of Sparta. It was there that pleaſure and amuſement reſided in the midſt of continual labour: there the ſevereſt toils paſſed for mere recreation, while the ſlighteſt entertainments were ever attended with ſome inſtructive moral. It was at Sparta that the citizens continually aſſembled, devoted their whole lives to diverſions which engaged the attention of the ſtate, and to ſports which were never interrupted but in time of war.

But I already hear the witlings begin their raillery. They aſk me, Whether, after ſo many marvellous inſtructions, I would not alſo recommend the introduction of the naked dances of the Spartan laſſes, among our Genevan amuſements? I anſwer, That I ſhould be very glad if our eyes and hearts were chaſte enough to bear ſuch an exhibition; and that the young women would in ſuch a ſituation be protected at Geneva by the public modeſty, as they were at Sparta.

But, with all the eſteem I have for my coun-

trymen, I am very ſenſible of the wide difference there is between them and the Spartans. It is for this reaſon I propoſe no inſtitutions of the latter, but thoſe which are adapted to our ſituation and capacity.

As Plutarch has undertaken to juſtify the abovementioned cuſtom, there is no need for me to meddle with it after him. It muſt be admitted, however, that this cuſtom was adapted only to the diſciples of a Lycurgus; that their frugal and laborious life, their purity and auſterity of manners, and their peculiar ſtrength of mind, could alone render innocent to them a ſight ſo ſhocking to the modeſty of every nation that made pretenſions to it.

But can it be thought that the artful dreſs of our women is not in the main as dangerous as abſolute nakedneſs? the firſt effects of which would by habit be turned into indifference, and perhaps into diſguſt. It is well known, that ſtatues and pictures never offend, except when part of the body is covered; which covering renders the nudities obſcene. The direct power of the ſenſes is little and confined; it is the imagination that renders them capable of doing ſo much miſchief: it is this which enflames the deſires, by repreſenting things more charming than they really are: it is this which occaſions the eye to be offended at naked objects, from the notion that they ought to be clothed.

There is no dreſs, though ever ſo modeſt, thro' which the eye, when aſſiſted by the imagination, will not penetrate. A young female Chineſe would raviſh more hearts at Pekin, only by diſplaying the tip of her ſhoe, than the fineſt girl in the univerſe dancing naked on the banks of Tay-

Taygetus. But when women attire themſelves with ſuch apparent careleſſneſs and real art, as is at preſent the cuſtom; when they ſhew a little, only to make us wiſh for more; when the the obſtacle oppoſed to the ſight is deſigned only to inflame the imagination; when they conceal only part of the object, the better to ſet off that which is expoſed;

Heu! male tum mites defendit pampinus uvas.

Let us here finiſh theſe numerous digreſſions. This, thank heaven, is the laſt, and I come to the concluſion of my epiſtle. I mentioned the feſtivals of the Spartans as a model of thoſe I would recommend to my fellow-citizens. It was not their object only, but their ſimplicity alſo, that engaged my approbation. They had no pomp, no parade, no luxury: a ſecret charm of patriotiſm rendered them pleaſing, and they breathed a kind of military ſpirit becoming a free people *. The Lacedemonians, engaged

* I remember to have been much ſtruck with a very ſimple ſight, in my infancy, which has been ſtrongly impreſſed on my memory ever ſince, notwithſtanding the diſtance of time and and the multiplicity of objects that have intervened. The regiment of St Gervais having performed their exerciſe, they ſat down as uſual to ſupper in companies: after which, moſt of the regiment met in the ſquare of St Gervais, and went to dancing, officers and ſoldiers all together, round the fountain; on the baſon of which were placed drums, fifes, and men with lighted flambeaux. After people have been exhilarated by feaſting, their dancing does not exhibit any thing very engaging: and yet the concerted motion of five or ſix hundred men dreſſed in uniform, holding one another by the hands, and forming a long train, which winded in cadence and without confuſion, through numberleſs turns, returns, and figured evolutions; the ſongs that animated them, the noiſe of the drums, the light of the torches, and a certain military apparatus amidſt a ſcene of pleaſure; all this together, I ſay, formed

neither in buſineſs nor pleaſure, or at leaſt what we ſhould denominate ſuch, paſſed the day in a pleaſing uniformity, without finding it too long, and their whole life in the ſame, without finding it too ſhort. They returned home every evening gay and good-humoured, to take their frugal repaſt, content with their country, their fellow-citizens, and themſelves. If you want a ſample

ed a moſt agreeable ſight, which it was impoſſible not to be affected with. As it was late, the women were gone to bed; but they ſoon got up, and the windows were ſoon full of female ſpectators, who inſpired the actors with freſh ſpirit. But they could not confine themſelves long to their windows. They came down into the ſquare; the wives flocked to their huſbands; the ſervants brought wine; and the children, awakened by the noiſe, came running half naked to their parents. The dance was of courſe ſtopped; and now nothing paſſed but embracing, laughing, healths, and careſſes. There reſulted from all this ſuch an univerſal tranſport, which cannot be deſcribed, but which in times of general joy one naturally feels from being ſurrounded by every thing that is dear and valuable. My father, I remember, embraced me with a palpitation of heart, which I think I feel and ſhare with him ſtill. "John," ſaid he, "love thy country. Behold thy honeſt countrymen; they are all friends and brothers; joy and unanimity reign in their hearts. Thou art a Genevan. Some time or other thou wilt ſee other people: but when thou haſt travelled as much as thy father, thou wilt ſtill ſay thou didſt never ſee their fellows."

They would now have returned to dancing; but it was impoſſible: They hardly knew what they were about, their heads being affected by an intoxication far more pleaſing than that of wine. After ſtaying ſome time longer therefore, laughing and chatting in the ſquare, they were obliged to ſeparate, each retiring quietly with his family. Thus did thoſe amiable and prudent women bring home their huſbands, not by diſturbing, but by partaking of their pleaſures. I am ſenſible that this light, which ſo much affected me, would have had no charms for many others. One muſt have eyes peculiarly adapted to ſee it, and a heart to feel it. No, there is no genuine joy in ſociety, but that of the whole community; and the true ſentiments of nature are felt only by the common people. Dignity! thou daughter of Pride, and mother of Care! did ever thy gloomy ſlaves enjoy one moment in their whole lives like this I have been deſcribing?

ſample of theſe public diverſions, I will give you one mentioned by Plutarch. There were, ſays he, three companies of dancers, according to the three ſeveral ages of nature; and each company conſtituted a chorus to the dance. The old men began the firſt, ſinging the following couplet:

We were once, tho' now we're old,
Valiant, hardy, young, and bold.

The company of young men followed next, and ſung in their turn, claſhing their arms in cadence,

We are bold and hardy now,
And defiance dare avow.

Afterwards came that of the children, who anſwered them, ſinging as loud as they could,

Now tho' feeble ſtriplings, we
Soon ſhall bold and hardier be.

Such, Sir, are the entertainments beſt adapted to republican governments. With reſpect to that of a theatre, on which your article of Geneva hath obliged me to expatiate in this epiſtle; I foreſee, that, if ever private intereſt ſhould eſtabliſh it within our walls, it will be attended with the moſt fatal effects. Some of theſe I have mentioned, and could point out many more; but it might be betraying too great an apprehenſion of imaginary evils, which the prudence and vigilance of our magiſtrates know how to prevent. I do not take upon me therefore to inſtruct thoſe who are wiſer than myſelf. It is ſufficient for me, if I have ſaid enough to conſole the youthful part of my countrymen for the

the want of an amuſement which may prove ſo prejudicial to their country. I admoniſh thoſe fortunate youths to profit by the advice, with which you have concluded your article. May they be ſenſible of their lot, and deſerve it! May they be able to perceive how far ſolid happineſs is preferable to thoſe idle pleaſures which are in the end deſtructive of it! And may they tranſmit to their poſterity the virtues, the liberty, and the peace, which they have received as an inheritance from their forefathers! With this laſt wiſh I conclude the preſent writing; and with this ſhall conclude my life.

LETTERS

On different OCCASIONS.

To COUNT *de* TRESSAN *.

SIR, *Paris, Dec.* 26. 1755.

I Honour you, as we all do; and am pleaſed that I have an opportunity of adding gratitude to reſpect, being in reality obliged to Mr Paliſſot † for having undeſignedly procured me thoſe

* Chamberlain to the Duke of Lorrain King of Poland.

† This gentleman, who was member of the Society of arts and ſciences at Nancy, had written a Comedy called *The Philoſophers*, in which Mr. Rouſſeau was turned into ridicule; and that in ſo groſs a manner as to give offence to the ſovereign; who, on that account, had determined to have him expelled the ſociety of Nancy.

thoſe inſtances of your goodneſs which permit me to aſſure you of my eſteem. If that writer hath failed in the reſpect which he and every one elſe owes to the prince whom he deſigned to amuſe, no one ought to think him more inexcuſable than I. But, if all his offence is the having expoſed my abſurdities, he claims the right and privilege of the ſtage; I ſee nothing in this to reprehend him for, as a man; and, as an author, I think he hath the merit of being fortunate in the choice of his ſubject. I deſire, therefore, you will not liſten to what the zeal, ariſing from the friendſhip and generoſity of M. d'Alembert, may ſuggeſt on this head; nor by any means give any chagrin, for ſuch a trifle, to a man of merit, who hath not in the leaſt hurt me, and who muſt ſuffer greatly under the diſgrace of having offended the king of Poland and you.

My heart is greatly affected by thoſe elogiums with which you have honoured my fellow-citizens under your command. In fact, the Genevans are naturally of a good diſpoſition; they are open and ingenuous, do not want ſenſe, and require only good examples to make them altogether good themſelves. Permit me, Sir, to exhort thoſe young officers my countrymen, to profit by your's; to render themſelves worthy of your goodneſs; and to improve, under your eye, thoſe good qualities which they owe perhaps to you, and which you impute to their education. For my own part, I ſhall myſelf take the advice I now give them, when you come to Paris: let them ſtudy the ſoldier, I will ſtudy the philoſopher; our common object will be the man of probity, and you will be ſtill our maſter.

To the ſame; in anſwer to his Reply to the foregoing.

SIR,

WHatever danger I riſk of becoming importunate, I cannot forbear adding, to the acknowledgements I owe you, ſome remarks on the enregiſtring * the affair of M. Paliſſot; on which head, I muſt firſt take the liberty to tell you, that even my admiration of the virtues of the king of Poland, do not permit me to accept that proof of his goodneſs which his Majeſty is pleaſed to honour me with on this occaſion, but on condition that the whole affair ſhall be buried in oblivion. I dare ſay that it ill ſuits with his greatneſs of mind to do an imperfect favour, and that it will be moſt agreeable to him to grant a pardon without reſerve. Beſides, can it be called a favour, to perpetuate ſuch a puniſhment? And ſhould not the regiſters of an academy ſerve rather to palliate than to ſet forth the little faults of its members? In fine, however ſmall be the eſtimation in which I hold our contemporaries, God forbid we ſhould degrade them ſo far, as to enregiſter a circumſtance as an act of virtue, which is, in fact, nothing more than the moſt ſimple ſtep that every man of letters would have to take were he in my place.

Finiſh then, Sir, the good work you have ſo well begun in a manner worthy of you. Let no more be ſaid of a trifle that hath already made too much noiſe, and given more chagrin to Mr Paliſſot than ſuch an affair deſerved. What ſhall we have done for him, if the pardon coſts him as dear as the puniſhment?

Permit

* The method propoſed by the king of Poland, on finding Mr. Rouſſeau averſe to the intended expulſion of Mr. Paliſſot.

Permit me to omit replying to thoſe exceſſive encomiums you are pleaſed to honour me with: they are ſevere leſſons which I ſhall profit by; for I am not ignorant, and this letter is a proof of it, that we are always moderate in the praiſe of thoſe whom we perfectly eſteem. But, Sir, the full explanation of this ſubject muſt be deferred till a perſonal interview. I wait with impatience the pleaſure you have promiſed me; when you will find, that, from ſome cauſe or other, you will no longer praiſe me when we know each other.

To the ſame.

SIR, *Paris*, Jan. 17. 1756.

IT is with great ſatisfaction I learn that you have entirely put an end to the affair of Mr Paliſſot, and I thank you for it with all my heart. I ſhall ſay nothing to you of the little diſpleaſure it may have occaſioned you, as things of this nature are never felt by a philoſopher; and beſides, you know better than I, that the reflection on a good action always effaces the little uneaſineſs that may have attended it. After having ſo happily terminated this buſineſs then, we have nothing farther to deſire of you; nor do I deſire to hear of it any more.

To M. *de* GINGINS *de* MOIRY,

Member of the Sovereign Council of the Republic of Berne, and Bailiff of the Lordſhip of Yverdon.

VITAM IMPENDERE VERO.

SIR, *Motiers*, July 21. 1762.

AGreeable to your kind permiſſion, I take this

this opportunity of calling to your remembrance, one who, with an heart overflowing with gratitude, will ever cherish the sentiments with which you have inspired him. The favourable opinion I have entertained of mankind has been the source of all my misfortunes; but they soon convinced me how greatly I was mistaken. It was requisite I should become acquainted with you, and the happy few who have the honour of resembling you, in order to prevent my blushing for an error which cost me so dear. I was sensible that truth was not to be spoken in this age with impunity, nor perhaps in any other; I was satisfied to suffer for the cause of God; but I did not expect, I confess, the extraordinary and unusual treatment I have since experienced. Of all the evils incident to mankind, shame and contempt are those against which a liberal mind is least prepared. The most sanguine barbarity took me by surprise. My reputation publicly defamed, by the very persons appointed to avenge injured innocence; treated as a malefactor in my native country, at a time when I meant to do it honour; pursued as a criminal, and driven from every sanctuary where I hoped to find shelter and protection; nought remained for me but trouble and perplexity of mind. Without your assistance, I should never have been comforted. Your consolations, illustrious friend, have alleviated my misery; your conversation has raised my spirits; and your esteem, by soothing my pride, has put me in a situation of mind that will enable me to preserve my dignity. I have gained more by your affection, than I have lost by my disgrace. I hope, Sir, the continuation of it, in spite of the

the buſy clamours of fanaticiſm, or the artful calumnies of impiety; you are poſſeſſed of too much virtue, to hate me for daring to believe in God, and too wiſe to puniſh me for uſing that reaſon which he hath given me.

To M. FAVRE, *Firſt Syndic of the Republic of Geneva:*

Wherein M. ROUSSEAU renounces for ever his right of being a Burgeſs and Citizen of the City and Republic of Geneva.

SIR,

BEING at length recovered from the profound aſtoniſhment into which the unexpected proceedings of the grand council had thrown me, I have reſolved to act what the dictates of honour and reaſon enjoin, though with the utmoſt violence to my heart: I therefore, Sir, declare to you, and intreat your doing the ſame on my part to the grand council, That I now reſign and renounce my right of burgerſhip in the city and republic of Geneva; and having endeavoured to diſcharge all the duties annexed to that title, to the utmoſt of my abilities, without enjoying any of its advantages, I do now intend, in breaking off my public connection with the ſtate, to remain a paſſive ſpectator of its concerns.

I have exerted myſelf in ſtriving to render the name of GENEVA honourable. I have loved my countrymen with tenderneſs; I have neglected nothing that might deſerve their love in return: but nobody has ever been more unſucceſsful; I could wiſh to pleaſe them, even whilſt loaded

with their hatred. The laſt ſacrifice I am capable of making, is that of a name, which has always been dear to me. But, Sir, though I may be a ſtranger to my country, I can never regard it with indifference.

I ſhall remain attached by a tender remembrance, and ſhall forget nothing of it but its injuries. May it always flouriſh, and ſee its glory increaſed day by day! And may it never want a perpetual ſucceſſion of citizens better and more fortunate than I! Be pleaſed to accept the aſſurance of my profound reſpects *.

Motiers-Travers, May 12. 1763.

To a FELLOW-CITIZEN.

I PERCEIVE, Sir, by the honour of your letter of the 18th inſtant, that you form a very inconſiderate judgment of me under my diſgrace: it is ſo eaſy a thing to oppreſs the miſerable, that one is generally diſpoſed to conſtrue their very misfortunes into crimes. You ſay that my behaviour is unaccountable; yet it is as clear, as the ſad neceſſity that reduced me to it. Diſgraced in ſo public a manner in my own country, without one friendly voice in oppoſition to the cruel ſentence, after ten months hope, I ought certainly to take the reſolution that only could preſerve my honour ſo cruelly offended; it was attended with the moſt lively ſenſations of grief, but what could I do? If I ſhould voluntarily continue a member of the ſtate after what has paſſed, would not that be

* It was determined to accept of the reſignation of M. Rouſſeau, and that his letter ſhould be entered in the regiſter.

conſenting to my own diſhonour? I cannot comprehend how you can aſk me what injury my countrymen had done me. Can a man of your underſtanding be ignorant, that, in all public tranſactions, whatever is done by the magiſtrate is conſidered as the act of the ſtate, when none of thoſe whoſe right it was to diſſent gave the leaſt oppoſition? It is not to the people of Geneva alone that I am accountable: it is to myſelf; to the public, by whom I am unfortunately known; and to poſterity, to whom I may be known. If I was fool enough to endeavour to perſuade the reſt of Europe, that the Genevans diſapproved of the conduct of their magiſtrates, would not they laugh at me! Do we not know (would they reply) that the order of burgeſſes have a right to remonſtrate in all caſes where they think the laws injured, and in which it diſapproves of the conduct of the magiſtrates? What has been done in a year and half that you have waited? If only five or ſix burgeſſes had entered a proteſt, you might be believed with regard to what you have advanced; that ſtep would have been eaſy and legal, without any diſturbance of the public tranquillity: why was not that done? Does not the ſilence of every body gave the lie to your aſſertion? Shew us the marks of that diſapprobation you have attributed to them. This, Sir, is what the world would anſwer, and that very juſtly; we judge men by their actions, and not by their thoughts.

Perhaps there were many ways of revenging the injury; but there was but one that could repel it without violence, and I have choſen it. But if that does hurt to myſelf only, do I not

deſerve pity, inſtead of the reproaches I have met with? You tell me, I had no occaſion to demand the abdication of my burgerſhip. But this proves nothing: we differ widely in our reckoning; for I pretended not to demand that reſignation, but to give it. I had ſtudied my rights long enough to know them, though I never uſed them but in that one inſtance; having, on my ſide, cuſtom, the authority of reaſon, and the law of nature; that of Grotius, of the moſt learned civilians, and even of the council themſelves: I am not therefore to regulate my conduct by your miſtaken notions. Every one knows, that any agreement infringed by one party, becomes void on the ſide of the other: ſo that if I owed every thing to my country, does it owe me nothing in return? I have paid the debt I owed it, has it paid me what was my due? I confeſs, we are never at liberty to forſake it; but when it rejects us, we may then quit it without breach of duty. We might do ſo in the caſes I have mentioned, and why not in mine? If I took an oath to my country, did it not alſo take one to me? By violating its engagements, it has acquitted me of mine; and in offering me affronts me of an ignominious nature, it has left me at liberty to return them. You ſay, If the citizens had made any ſuch repreſentation to the council, you ſhould not wonder if they had been impriſoned. Nor I neither: it would not have ſurpriſed me; becauſe thoſe who were armed with force might have acted as they pleaſed. But as there is a law (which will never be obſerved) to prevent a citizen from departing out of the territory of the republic, who would preſerve the privileges of one, without licence;

licence; ſo no perſon has occaſion to demand a right he is in poſſeſſion of: when a Genevan chuſes to quit his country to eſtabliſh himſelf abroad, nobody ever thought of objecting againſt it as a crime; a man is never ſent to priſon for that. It is true, ſuch a renunciation is ſeldom ſolemnly executed; but thoſe who in this manner diſfranchiſe themſelves have not perhaps received a public affront, and conſequently are not obliged to make a ſurrender of their right of burgerſhip into the hands of the ſociety that gave it. I conſidered with myſelf and waited a long time before I took a ſtep that has ruined me. To you, O people of Geneva, I truſted my honſour! I was entirely ſatisfied with you; but you have ſo badly taken care of the depoſit, that I was compelled to remove it out of your hands. But, my dear countrymen, whom I ſhall always love in ſpite of your ingratitude, I beg you may not, by your cruel and diſhoneſt purpoſes, oblige me to write my apology to the public: ſpare me, I pray, in the midſt of all my other calamities, the grief of defending myſelf at your expence.—Remember, Sir, it is much againſt my inclination that I am obliged to anſwer you in this manner; truth on this occaſion has no ſecond choice. If you had addreſſed me with leſs rudeneſs, I ſhould have made you my confident, and have poured all my griefs into your boſom. Your friendſhip ſhall be always dear to me, and I ſhall think it my duty to cultivate it; but I conjure you, if you ſhould write to me again, to give no more ſuch cruel proofs of it, and to conſult better the goodneſs of your own heart. I ſincerely embrace you with all mine.

To Mr PROFESSOR *de* FELICE.

Motiers, March 14. 1765.

I HAVE had no hand in writing the book intitled *The Princes*. I have never ſeen it, and doubt even whether it exiſts. I eaſily comprehend from what quiver that arrow comes, as well as many of the ſame ſort; and I find, my enemies in defending themſelves, make uſe of weapons worthy of their malice. As I have never diſowned any work that was mine, I have a right to be credited when I deny thoſe that are not. I beg, Sir, you will receive and publiſh this declaration in favour of truth, and of him who has nothing but that for his defence. Be pleaſed to accept my reſpectful compliments.

I am, &c.

To Mr. *******.

Motiers, May 28. 1764.

IT is doing a ſignal ſervice to a poor ſolitary like me, ſo remote from hearing news, to acquaint him with what paſſes relative to himſelf. This is what you have very obligingly done, in ſending me a copy of my pretended letter to his Grace the Archbiſhop of Auſch. That letter, as you have gueſſed, is no more mine, than are all the falſe writings current at Paris under my name. I have not ſeen the mandate, to which this letter is an anſwer; I have never heard of it: and, till within theſe eight days, I knew not that there was one M. Montillet who was Archbiſhop. I could ſcarce believe that the author of that letter would ſeriouſly perſuade the world that it

was

was mine. Have I not cares enough of my own, without meddling with other people's affairs? When was I ever known to be a party-man? What new intereſt could have ſo ſuddenly changed my mind? Are the Jeſuits in a better ſituation than when I refuſed to write againſt them in their diſgrace? Who has ever known me to be ſo baſe, ſo inconſiderate, as to inſult the miſerable? What is the fate of the Jeſuits to me, be it what it will? Is a melancholy truth dearer to me one ſide than the other? and ſhould I ſuffer leſs perſecution, whether they were up or down? On the other hand, let the letter be read with attention, and every one will judge with you that I am not the author; it is contradictory and confuſed, as may be obſerved even in the addreſſes; it is dated from Neufchatel, where I never yet have ſet my foot; the phraſe of *moſt humble ſervant* is uſed, which is not my manner of concluding a letter. They make me take the title of Citizen of Geneva, which I have laid down. In the very beginning of it, they make me very warm in favour of M. de Voltaire, one of my moſt ſanguine perſecutors, and which comes therefore with great propriety from a defence like mine; they affect to mimic my phraſe, and theſe imitations falſify themſelves: the letter may be written in a better ſtyle than I am capable of, but it is not mine. They there give me low expreſſions, make me ſay indelicacies which are not to be found in any of my writings: they make me uſe the word *you*, in addreſſing myſelf to God; a mode of expreſſion I do not blame, but never practiſe. To imagine me the author of this letter, you muſt ſuppoſe I wanted to appear in diſguiſe.

guiſe. If my name were not ſubſcribed, nobody would be eaſily perſuaded that it really came from me,

Such, Sir, are the honourable weapons uſed by my adverſaries; not content to attack me in my own works, they take a more cruel method of attributing to me their own fictions. Indeed the public has not been hitherto impoſed on, and it muſt be very blind if it could now be deceived. The deciſion I expect in this affair is but a mean conſolation after ſo many injuries. You know of the freſh affliction I have received; I ſuffer more in the loſs of M. de Luxemburg, than in all the reſt of my misfortunes. I ſhall feel it, ſo long as I am on this ſide the grave.

He was my comforter while he lived, and will be my protector after his death. His memory, dear to and revered by every one, will defend mine from the outrages of my enemies; and when the tongue of calumny ſhall endeavour to ſully it with malediction and obloquy, the world will ſay, "How can all this be poſſible, the honeſteſt man in France was his friend?" I thank you, Sir, and ſalute you with all my heart.

ROUSSEAU.

END *of the* EIGHTH VOLUME.